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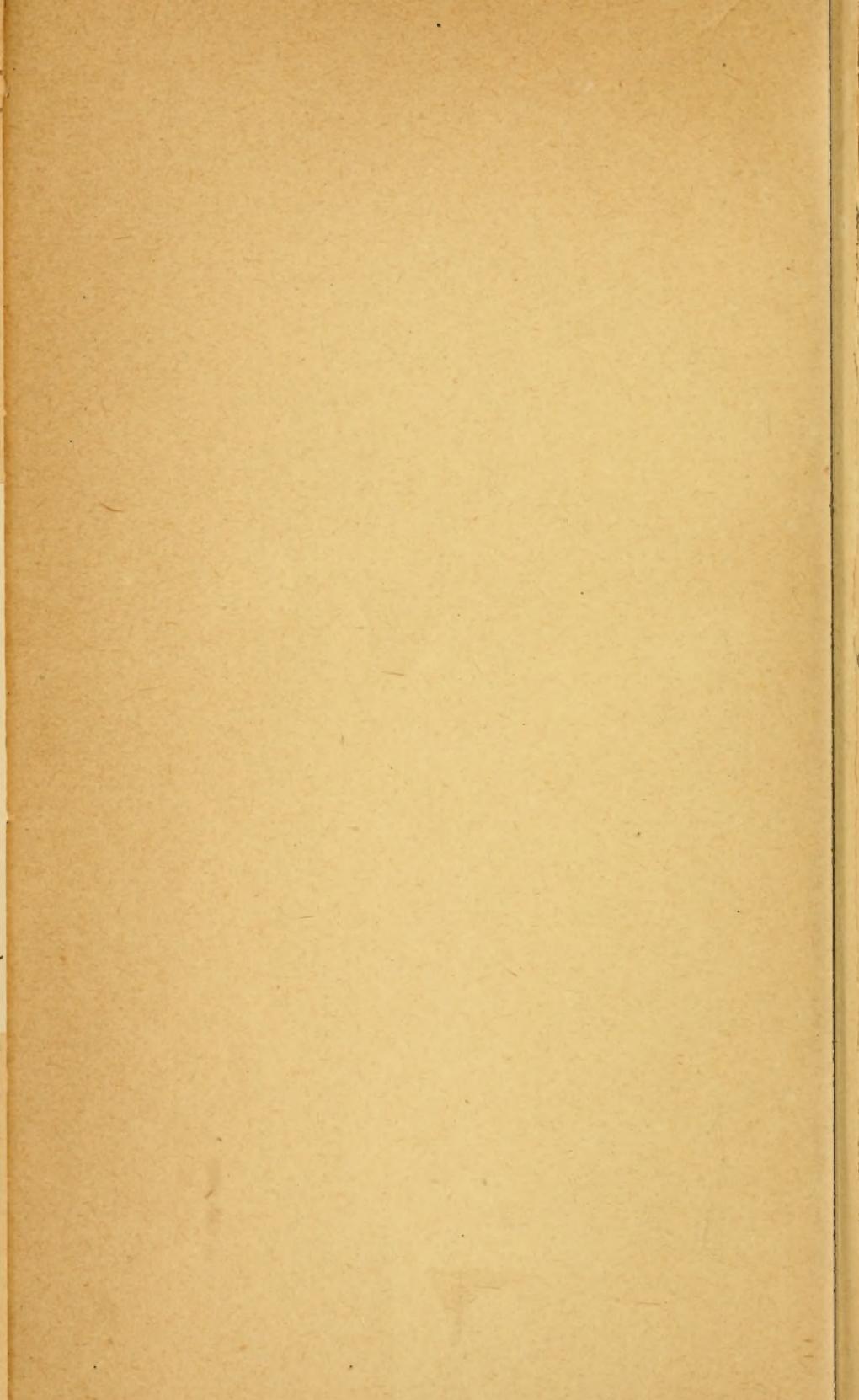
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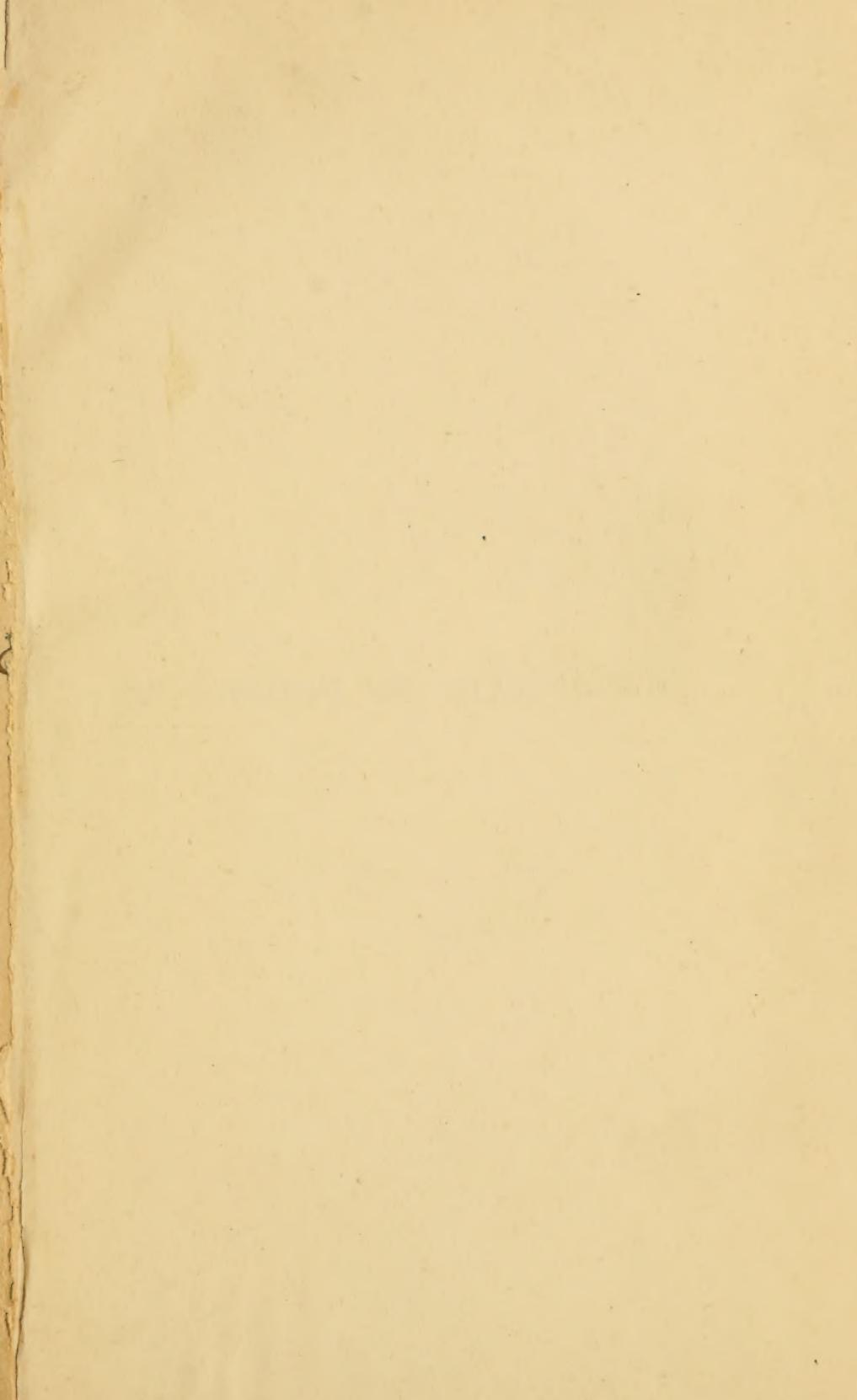
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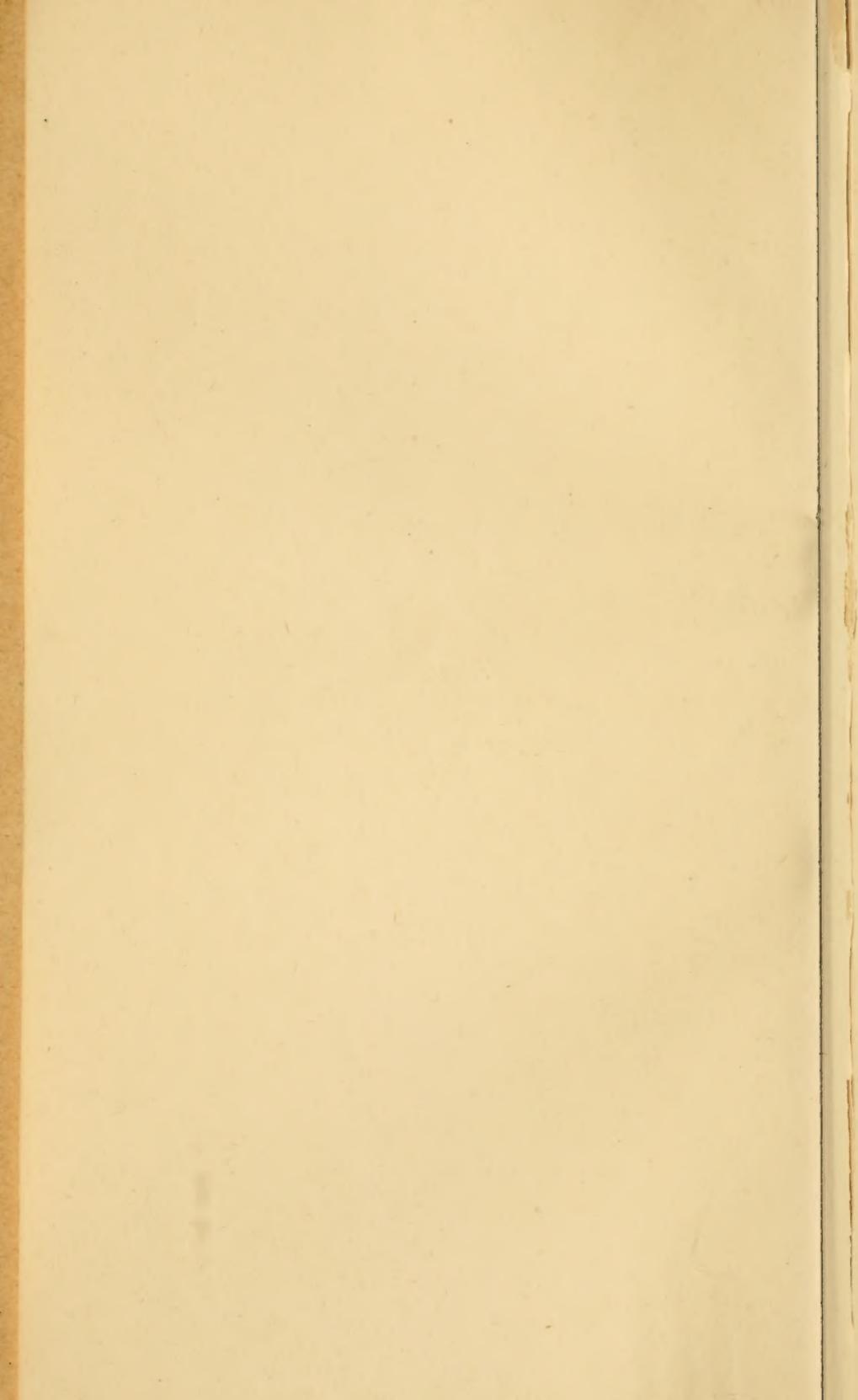
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The throne of eloquence

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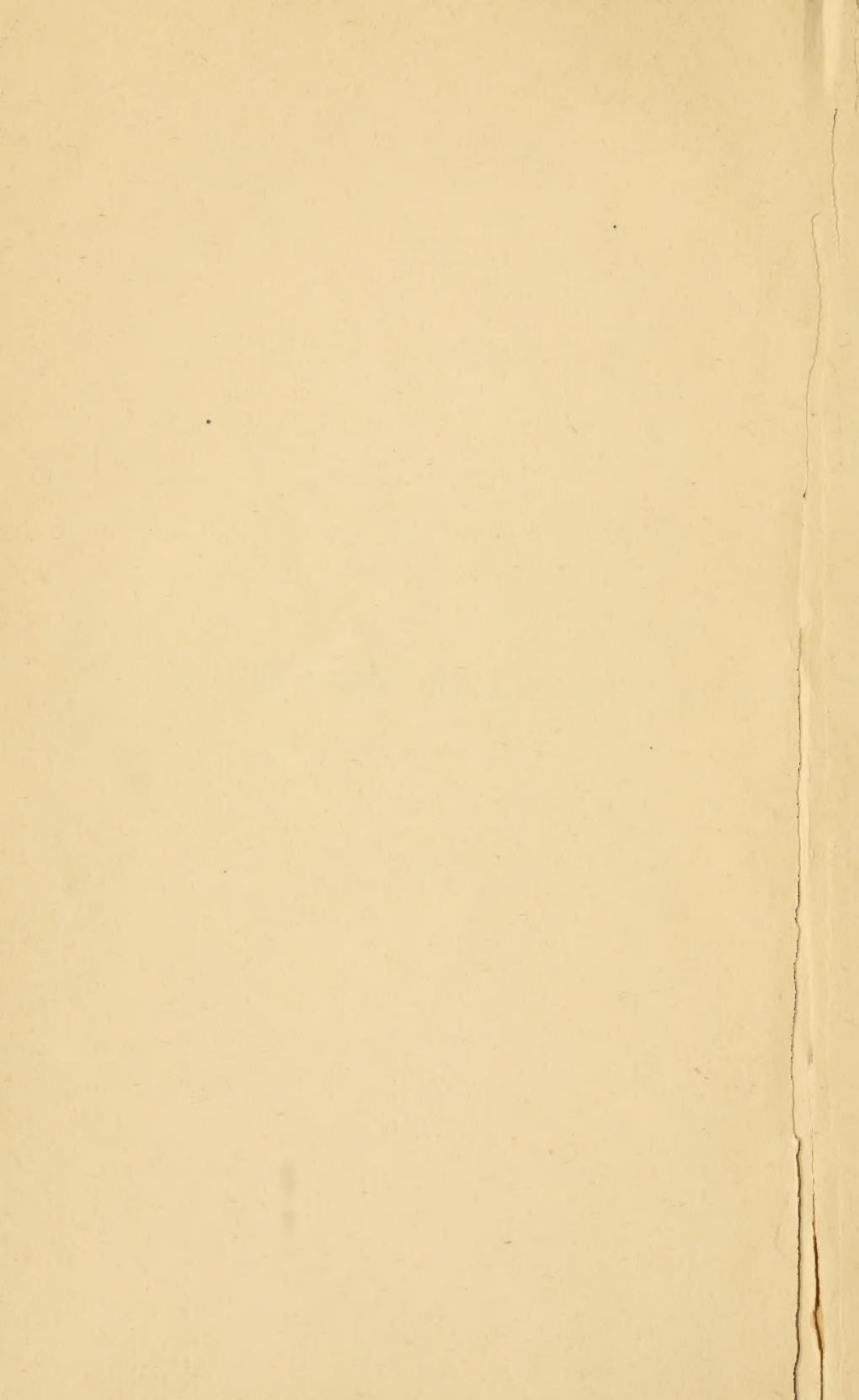
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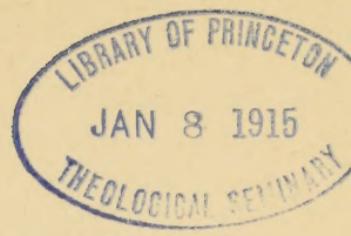






THE THRONE OF ELOQUENCE.





THE THRONE OF ELOQUENCE:

Great Preachers, Ancient and Modern.

BY



E. PAXTON HOOD,

AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD OF ANECDOTE," ETC.

NEW YORK:
FUNK AND WAGNALLS,
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1888.

PRESS OF
FUNK & WAGNALLS,
18 and 20 Astor Place,
NEW YORK

TO CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

DEAR MR. SPURGEON,—In inscribing this volume to you, permit me to say that I am simply fulfilling the affectionately expressed wish of my dear husband. You will perhaps remember that nearly twenty years since he had the pleasure and honour to deliver to your students a series of lectures on the *Vocation of the Preacher*, which subsequently took shape in a somewhat bulky volume, entitled “*Lamps, Pitchers, and Trumpets*,” the dedication of which you were kind enough to accept. But earlier than this, and some thirty years ago, he published anonymously “*The Lamps of the Temple*,” which you may have seen, and in which an exceedingly appreciative and warmly eulogistic paper on one CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON, then just emerging into fame, had the honour to present, I believe, the first prescient forecast of his subsequently great and successful career. But, before the “*Lamps of the Temple*,” there was a little volume, the parent of all his succeeding ones on this subject, and which he published under the modest and somewhat pathetic “*nom-de-plume*” of “*L’Agneau Noir*.” In more recent years,—as the “*Preacher’s Lantern*,” various papers in different periodicals, and lectures given in America and elsewhere abundantly testify,—the pulpit and its work has been

to him a most absorbing theme, almost, I may say, the passion of his life. The books to which I have referred had all been out of print for many years, but he, who was never satisfied with any work he ever did, was not disposed to reproduce them as they had first appeared; still the subject haunted him, and in these later years the desire of his life has been to gather up, in a series of three or four volumes which he hoped would prove useful to ministers and students, all that he considered best and most worthy of permanence in his previous works on this his favourite topic. Hence this volume on "*The Throne of Eloquence*," and a second on "*The Vocation of the Preacher*," which he was not able quite to complete, but which will yet follow shortly. These, however, only accomplished half the work which he hoped to do, and I have ventured to trouble you and his readers with this lengthened explanation in order to account for the omission of much which was most attractive and valuable in the former works, and the absence of which must still leave his task unfinished. But, incomplete as is the work, kindly accept it, dear Sir—as he wished that you should do—in affectionate and reverent acknowledgment of the extraordinary work you have been called to perform, and the noble life you have been permitted to live, and of which he always spoke as your "*best sermon*."

I am, my dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

L. PAXTON HOOD.

BARNSBURY PARK, LONDON,
Sept. 24th, 1885.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE PULPIT THE THRONE OF ELOQUENCE	I
II. TONGUES OF FIRE	34
III. ST. BERNARD: THE MEDIÆVAL TONGUE OF FIRE	61
IV. THE FALSE FINERY OF THE PULPIT	103
V. JEREMY TAYLOR	136
VI. BUT WHAT IS ELOQUENCE?	168
VII. CHRYSOSTOM: THE THRONE IN THE EARLY CHURCH	204
VIII. WIT, HUMOUR, AND DROLLERY IN THE PULPIT	235
IX. FATHER TAYLOR, OF BOSTON	285
X. LIVE COALS, TEXTS AND TOPICS OF DISCOURSE	309
XI. THE HEALTHFUL DIVINE—ALEXANDER WAUGH	336
XII. LIVE COALS AND DRY STICKS—THE ART OF OB- SECURITY AND THE SCIENCE OF CLEARNESS .	356
XIII. JAMES STRATTEN	393
XIV. THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE IMAGINATION .	418
XV. HENRY MELVILLE	436
INDEX	469



CHAPTER I.

THE PULPIT THE THRONE OF ELOQUENCE.

THE Story of the Pulpit through all ages, from that celebrated "pulpit of wood" which Ezra the scribe put up in the large square near the watergate down to the present time, is one of the most impressive and interesting histories in the world; it has never really been sufficiently and effectually recited, but it is not an exaggeration to say that it yields to no other story in eminent human interest. The history of music, the history of any department of art, the history of the drama, the history of secular oratory, would none of them present such a variety of historic incident and interesting human material; and neither would show such an amazing series of consequences following in its train. Whatever questions may be raised or debated as to the power of the pulpit in our own day, it has unquestionably wrought great social changes in the past, and has been a vehicle of pre-eminent power.

Reviewing the history of the Church through all ages, the Apostle's words that by "the foolishness of preaching" God would save the world are really prophetic. Thus Cowper's often-quoted lines are true:—

"I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate peculiar powers)

Must stand acknowledged while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
The legate of the skies, his theme Divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear ;
By him, the violated law speaks out
Its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.”

Thus Cowper's estimate of the pulpit seems to be very high :—

“ The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.”

The History of the Pulpit may almost be described as the history of the most important achievements of the human voice, conveying a message of more than human power. Therefore we call it the Throne of Eloquence. How wonderful is the story of St. Bernard, whether in the fields of *Sens* or in the Chartreuse of the Valley of Wormwood. Equally wonderful the story of Savonarola in Florence ; then, too, the work of Luther, and all the great preachers of the Reformation ; and what a host of names instantly start to the memory, of leaders whose words kept alive a flame, however languishing, of spiritual power in the hearts of men throughout England, America, and even in other parts of the world. We will refer in future pages to Du Moulin, Du Bosc, Claude, Saurin, and the great masters of the Reformed Church of France ; then in little communities, such as those in the scattered villages of Holland or among the Llanos in the south of France. Ah ! what a story is that of the pastors

of the desert ! What an attraction there has been, what a human link and bond of sympathy, in the preacher, in the first instance, as the village clergyman, or, in the other, as the wandering visitor and itinerant. How beautiful upon the mountains have been the feet of these bringers of glad tidings ! How lovely were those messengers !

And how simple usually ! What costly sums have been expended on the stage or the orchestra for their great effects ! The pulpit and the preacher have relied on no external attractions, and in their most efficient moods, can only arrest souls in their times of need, and deep feeling, and thoughtfulness. God has set forth the preacher as the world's great human renovator, and, in the course of the following pages, we will attempt to show that, with all its frequent delinquencies and sad short-comings, the human voice from the pulpit has sounded out the notes of social reformation and regeneration. We grant the delinquencies of the pulpit. Cowper, whose noble monogram we quoted just now, gives us quite another description of the man in the pulpit :—

“ Behold the picture ! is it like ? Like whom !
The thing that mounts the rostrum with a skip,
And then skips down again ; pronounces a text,
Cries *Hem !* and reading what he never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddles up his work,
And, with a well-bred whisper, closes the scene.”

The stories of both orders of men are innumerable, and as interesting as numerous. In the course of the following chapters we shall attempt to gather, from various sources, illustrations of the pulpit in its dignity and defection.

Another writer, following Cowper, has delineated the coxcomb of the pulpit :—

“ See where the famed Adonis passes by,
The man of spotless life—and spotless tie ;
His reputation—none the fact disputes—
Has ever been as brilliant as his boots ;
And all his flock believe exceptionless
His points of doctrine—and his points of dress.
He makes the supercilious worldling feel
That e'en religion can be—quite genteel.
He lets the hesitating sceptic know
A man may be a Christian and—a beau,
And so combines, despite satiric railers,
A model for professors and for tailors.”

All this has its side of truth, but the pulpit has been none the less the throne of eloquence. It has been the great precursor of the mightiest conquests of civil freedom ; it has been the intrepid champion of civil liberty, if sometimes it have even shown its great power in more than a questionable manner, as in the days of the Crusades, when it stirred Europe to madness. More than all these achievements, the pulpit has been the great power of God unto salvation ; it is the agency through which the Divine Spirit, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, moves the minds and hearts of men.

“ There stands the legate of the skies.”

When we have stood before the pulpit of Sainte Geneviève in Paris, we have thought of a fine occasion on which it was the throne of eloquence. That Church was, in those days, the Church of the

court of that cruel and licentious prince Francis the First ; the preacher was famous for his impassioned eloquence ; on this particular day, and at this service, there was an immense crowd of courtiers and ecclesiastics present, for in the royal pew there sat the king. That was the time, our readers cannot fail to remember, when the king and the Papists were burning men because they refused to acknowledge the sacrifice of the Mass. Standing in that pulpit, and in the presence of that splendid assembly, the preacher had the courage to utter that great truth,—“The end of all visible things is to lead us to invisible things ; the bread upon the altar is only to teach us that Christ is the food of the soul. Seated at the right hand of God Himself, Jesus Christ lives in the affections of His disciples. ‘*Seek those things which are above*,’ said the Apostle, ‘*where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*.’ Do not confine yourselves at Mass to what is upon the altar ; rise by faith *there* to find the Son of God ! When he has taken the elements does not the priest cry, ‘*Sursum corda*’?—that is, Lift up your hearts ! These words signify, Here is the bread, here is the wine, but Jesus is in heaven.” Then, with dignity, the preacher turned to the king, and exclaimed, “ Sire, if you wish to have Jesus Christ, do not look for Him in the visible elements ; soar to heaven on the wings of faith. What did St. Augustine say ? It is by believing in Jesus Christ that we eat His flesh ; if it were true that Jesus Christ could be devoured by the teeth, we should not say ‘*Sursum*’—upwards—but ‘*Deorsum*’—downwards. Sire, it is to heaven I invite you.

Hear the voice of the Lord! ‘*Sursum corda!*’
Sire, *sursum corda!* Lift up your heart!”

This was brave preaching; and we can imagine the uplifted finger of the preacher, and his voice ringing through the crowded church, and carrying conviction, we should think, to the crowd, when a single wave of the royal hand could have delivered him to the flames; nor do we wonder, under the circumstances, that the king heard him no more, and that the preacher had to make his escape as best he could from the effects of his all too faithful preaching. Sovereigns have often heard unpalatable truths from these “legates of the skies.”

Or, while we are in Paris, shall we step along to the mighty church of Notre Dame, and transfer our recollections and our imagination back only two centuries through the flowing tide of time? The occasion is great; it is the funeral service for Louis XIV.; of course all that could be done to heighten or deepen the sombre splendour was there. The vast church was draped in black, the silver shieldings flashing back the light of the taper, the torch, or flambeaux; the censers threw forth their fumes of incense, mounting in wreaths; there were all the trappings and pageants of a royal funeral. There were assembled all the chivalry of the nation, the royal princes, princesses, and the courtiers, proud and dissolute men, the gay and beautiful ladies, all, of course, in mourning; there the dead king lay on the bier, the costly catafalque, beneath the canopied pall before the pulpit, covered with all the emblazonments, the hatchments, and the insignia of royalty. The inhabitant of that coffin

had been no ordinary king; for seventy years, nominally and really, he had held the sceptre of France; he had assumed, as his flatterers had given to him, the designation of Great; he had been called Louis the *Magnifique*—Louis the Magnificent. In due season the great preacher Massillon entered the pulpit; he was a man of singularly holy, earnest, and simple life; the living conscience of the dead king had frequently trembled before the terrible preacher. “Monsignor,” the king said to him once, “when I hear other men, they make me think how brilliant they are; but when I hear you, I tremble for myself!” And now that preacher stood before the bier of the illustrious king; he stood a little while silent and quiet, and then he announced his text, from the book of Ecclesiastes: “Lo! I have become great.” No doubt it seemed a fitting text to commemorate the life and deeds of the prince who had been pre-eminently called “the Great.” The preacher stood quite still; his hands were crossed over his breast; his face settled on the coffin; mighty feelings struggled over the features; at last he broke the silence by those very, very simple words, “*There is nothing great but God!*” How simple! they seem a mere truism. We have no account of the tone, only that it was the preacher’s awful whisper; but the story is well known how, as he breathed the words, the whole congregation rose in consternation, and looked behind and about them. It must have been the man aided by the universal knowledge of his holy life; perhaps it was as if, in those words, the preacher challenged the eminence of the conqueror of the Rhine

and the builder of Versailles. He stood there, the legate of eternity, to question the arrogant claims of the monarch who had played so conspicuous a part in the annals of time. It was a great moment in the history of pulpit eloquence, but it also illustrated that the power of the preacher, like the power of the great singer, is not to be tested by the length of time he can talk, but by the intensity of the emotion he can excite.

But passing from the vast cathedral, instances are not wanting in which a drawing-room has become a throne of pulpit eloquence.

Two or three months since, from the pulpit of a wealthy congregation in the very immediate suburbs of London, upon a very fine, bright Sunday morning, a youthful preacher, fresh from the honours of his university, before announcing his text, apologized to his audience for it and for offending their taste upon so bright an occasion by such very uncomfortable suggestions as the text presented, which they would find in Ecclesiastes, etc., etc. : *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!* “Now,” exclaimed the youthful orator, “that is untrue!” He even went further, and affirmed, with all proper apologies for using phraseology so strong, that the language was—a lie(!), only resulting from the false philosophy of a worn-out man of the world; he then proceeded with his expatiation upon the soundness of nature and of things in general. It was impossible for the author of these pages to hear of this service without recalling to memory an incident which, as it is associated with the emergence of one of the

mightiest masters of pulpit oratory into notice, forms also an imperial circumstance in the story of the throne of eloquence ; it is a story recited in those delightful old French memoirs we know so well, and which Lady Jackson has reproduced in her chatty "Pictures of Old Paris ;" the circumstance transpired in the then incomparably most fashionable and grandly historical salon of Rambouillet. One night, when there were gathered, in this most famous drawing-room, all the most illustrious personages of the French nobility, the Marquis de Fenquières introduced to the company a young friend, a youthful abbé, probably scarcely so old as the juvenile orator mentioned above ; in the course of conversation the Marquis said his young friend was entering upon an ecclesiastical career, and he had heard from his college that he had extraordinary gifts in extemporaneous speaking. We know the people who frequented De Rambouillet, wits and verse-makers, masters of the stage, and great court celebrities ; but, as these things were whispered about the young Abbé, nothing would suit the company but they must have a sermon ; yes, and the Prince de Conti would have a sermon, if only the Abbé would preach, and preach impromptu. Several texts were to be shaken up in a bag, and one of the illustrious ladies was to draw one forth upon her lap, and hand it to the preacher. Youthful as he was, the preacher's appearance did not incline the company to gay or amusing ideas ; it was apparent very soon that if the singular event were to be an amusement to the company, it would probably be something more than

this to the preacher. Some objected that it was midnight, but the objection was soon overruled ; and so the ladies attempted to put aside their coquettish airs, and the gentlemen their carelessness and indifference ; a spinnet was removed from the dais, at the further end of the large and crowded *salon*, and here the young Abbé was to stand that he might be the better seen as well as heard by his illustrious congregation, who, after all, very likely regarded the episode as a kind of pleasing variety, a sort of little comedy which was to be enacted for their amusement. A lady drew forth a slip of paper, as had been agreed, and handed it to the young Abbé. Remarkable ! It was the same text as that of our young friend mentioned above, *Vanity of vanities ! all is vanity !* It had been agreed that he should have a quarter of an hour to review and to arrange his thoughts ; but, as the paper was handed to him, he declined this concession. He rose, stood before them, crossed himself, and glanced round with that peculiar smile which we, who know what he afterwards became, do not find it difficult to realize. The glance, young as he was, took in, with pathetic passion, the plumed and jewelled grand ladies and their cavaliers. Very singularly, the text seemed startlingly appropriate ; the young preacher offered no apology as he read it. He was very young ; we do not wonder to read that many men, young as himself, attempted to laugh ; but these attempts were very soon the only vanity in the proceeding ; that they were in the *salon* was soon forgotten. The exordium pronounced, then probably followed the

Ave Maria, as is usual with the French preacher, and he passed straightway into his discourse, and proceeded to unveil the vanities of the manifold scenes of human life—the vanity of life and the vanity of man. Naturally, no fragments of the discourse have been preserved ; but it was a very long one, and, before those piercing eyes and sharp face and earnestness so commanding in its intensity, they all went down. At that time there was probably no great pulpit orator in France ; long years after the young man became one of a race—some would demand that we should say the chief of a race—of illustrious contemporaries ; his fine poetic and religious fervour and powerful words startled ears accustomed only to the dryness and pedantry of ordinary speakers. It is curious to think that the first of the great sermons and of the great preachers of that seventeenth century in France appeared that night in the salon of Rambouillet. Tradition has told how, after he had frozen his hearers almost to horror as he poured contempt upon the vanities of time, he passed triumphantly through the sepulchre, and dwelt upon the sacrifice of Christ and the abiding blessings of eternity. Hitherto his name was unknown. The Duc d'Enghien pressed forward at the close ; taking the young man's hand, he inquired his name, and whence he came. “From Dijon,” and his name was BOSSUET ! This was his first appearance among men ; he was probably never again permitted to pass out of sight. How natural the contrast of the estimate this youth had formed of life and time to that of that other youth, our young friend of the other day.

The instance also calls to our mind the memory that this first appearance of Bossuet created a panic among fashionable abbés in Paris, frequenters of the Rambouillet or other such luxurious salons, and who thought they could preach. Especially was this the case with a certain Abbé Cotin. He was a very delightful person ; all the ladies loved him ; he also had the reputation of being a scholar ; he was a great utterer of pretty platitudes and soft phrases ; his words never ruffled self-complacency, or pricked a conscience ; he addressed elegant congregations week by week in the Chapel of the Louvre ; he was present and heard the sermon of the extraordinary youth, and he was not a little annoyed that even the super-refining criticisms of the *savants* of the Rambouillet could detect no flaw of taste in the impassioned flow of words ; but when the beautiful Duchesse de Longueville inquired of the Abbé his opinion, he simply shrugged his shoulders, and said, "The young man recites very well," and he proceeded to expound to her that it was no sermon at all ! This was, of course, at a later meeting in the same fashionable salon. "Recites !" said the Duchesse in amazement ; but, unfortunately for Cotin, no other than Corneille, the mighty master of French tragedy, was standing by ; perhaps he had a grudge against Cotin ; at any rate, he insisted that the Abbé should submit himself to the conditions with which the young Bossuet had complied, and give them a sermon. The homage to Bossuet had been universal ; it was probably, therefore, some spiteful satirist, or it might have been Corneille himself, who put into the Abbé's hands, as the theme

of his discourse, "I said in my haste, All men are liars!" It may be admitted that although a very fruitful theme, it was neither so solemn nor so suggestive of apt and pertinent illustrations as that which had been presented to Bossuet; but certainly, after two or three disjointed sentences, the Abbé floundered from the beginning. We have said he was a favourite with the ladies; naturally they perceived his embarrassment; most graciously they came to his assistance. One of them gave a loud scream; she had seen a spider run across her dress. We cannot suppose that even this untoward circumstance would have disconcerted the self-possession of Bossuet, but it threw the whole salon into confusion from which it did not recover itself. The Abbé affected to be indignant, and to recover for himself the dais; but it was generally whispered that it was too late to resume the discourse, and the great people began to stream away in a body, and the Marquis de Rambouillet seems himself to have assumed the dais and to have informed his guests that they would have no more attempts at preaching in the salon. Upon this occasion, certainly, the salon was not a throne of eloquence.

The young Bossuet, thus caught by surprise, and compelled to an unprepared sermon upon an impromptu text, reminds us of another instance in which a youthful preacher was called to a sudden exercise of his powers.

There is a capital story told in the very pleasant memoirs of that beautiful and admirable man Dr. Alexander Waugh; it was given to the Doctor at the Hague, and the incident appears to have hap-

pened before his visit there in 1802. There was a young man of great ability, a student for the ministry; his father was an ordinary preacher at the court of the Prince of Orange. The Prince wished to hear the son, but would scarcely condescend to ask him to take the pulpit; but he ordered the father to push the son into the pulpit without much notice, at the last moment, in order that the Prince might form a fair estimate of his powers. The Prince also gave to the father the text; it was from the eighth chapter of the Acts, from the twenty-sixth to the fortieth verse, the story of Philip and "the eunuch of great authority under Queen Candace." The young man was confounded, but there was no escape.

The church was crowded, the audience mostly courtly and noble. After the preliminary service, he announced his text, which he said contained four wonders which he would make the four heads of his sermon, and if he should say anything to which their ears had been unaccustomed in that place, he hoped the unprepared state of his mind and his sudden call would plead his apology, and that they would consider the things he might speak as, according to our Lord's promise, given to him in that hour.

"Head the First; *Wonder the First. A courtier reads!*" Here he deplored the sad neglect in the education of great men in modern times, their general ignorance, and the little attention paid by them to books in general.

"Head the Second; *Wonder the Second. A courtier reads the Bible!*" Here he dwelt upon and deplored the melancholy want of religious sentiments

and feelings in the minds of the great, and how impoverished and destitute such minds must be.

“Head the Third ; *Wonder the Third. A courtier owns himself ignorant of his subject !*” And here he dwelt at length, while he exposed the conceit and presumption of ignorance in high places, which fancied itself to be in possession of real knowledge, ashamed to confess its want of information. And then came

“Head the Fourth ; *Wonder the Fourth. A courtier applies to a minister of Christ for information, listens to his instruction, and follows his counsel !*” It was said that the prince usually slept through the whole sermon, but he neither winked nor nodded once while this sermon was going on. It is also said that this young preacher was never put into that pulpit again. The “legate” was too faithful !

Certainly such stories as these we have quoted are of men of a widely different order from him of whom Cowper speaks as “the thing which mounts the rostrum with a skip.”

The Church was born in the institution of preaching. Dean Milman, in a novel passage in his “History of the Early Church,” has with great truth and propriety shown that oratory in the new civilization was born in the Church.

It surely is not uninteresting to notice that as it expired in Greece and Rome with the decay of their republics and the decline of popular freedom, so the free spirit of Christianity again kindled and gave utterance to that free speech which is wholly incompatible with despotic institutions. Secular oratory has, no doubt, been guilty of many sins in

its vehemency of passion, and sacred oratory has not always been wise ; but it is almost safe to say that except in alliance with the great and glowing sentiment of freedom, oratory has no existence at all. Further than this, we are maintaining that the pulpit is the throne of the orator, not the senate, not the bar, not the platform. The voice raised in those various arenas, because it has appealed to more immediate and evident interests, has perhaps won a more extensive temporary fame ; but with a few exceptions, and those quite doubtful, the pulpit, in its history throughout all ages, has exhibited the most splendid conflagrations of eloquence, and rolled over the minds of men the most impressive and portentous thunders. There is at once reason in this and for this, and it is found in what we said just now. The highest and noblest speech is always in alliance with the affirmation of the highest and noblest destinies of the human mind and soul ; and the preacher, as, beyond any other orator, he deals with these, so when he is a man of eminent genius, like Chrysostom, Basil, Massillon, Robert Hall, or Lacordaire, possessed of reason, passion, and imagination in equal and eminent proportions, he becomes something of the bard and the seer in his character of a preacher or teacher, and deals with interests and matters which, as they are beyond the ordinary argument of the secular orator, appeal indeed to more remote and yet most immediate interests, and touch the deeper foundations of human nature. The genius of Romanism, especially in its later ages, has sought to raise the orchestra and all the paraphernalia of the altar, its blazing lights,

robes, and dumb mysterious motions, above the pulpit. The genius of Protestantism, and the Greek and Latin churches in the earlier years of their history, before they had corrupted themselves, employed the pulpit for vocalizing ideas, in order that they might create a moral impression and be a moral force over the natures of men. Thus, as it has been said, eloquence in the pulpit is a comprehensive intellectual virtue. In its great ages it had a power of which we know nothing now, very much resembling what we know of the eloquence of the ancients, absorbing the functions of the press, the senate, and the school, and moving men to flock in throngs and crowds to hear the many-gifted man who would utter some mighty and comprehensive idea which would enchain their memory and their conversation for months, perhaps for years after the event was past. Those days have gone, gone, shall we say most likely never to return? Shall we say a new order of things has succeeded? Then we must feel that *a power* has passed from the world.

But is not the pulpit the throne of eloquence still? It must be very clear to all readers that when we speak of the eloquence of the pulpit we do not mean a mere flow of words, however apparently exhaustless and rapid; this alone and by itself is not eloquence, any more than the page of a book covered with words constitutes fine writing, or a succession of sounds fine music. So also when we accept the verdict of Shakespeare—a verdict which has also the sanction of far more ancient names—that “action is eloquence,” it is not implied that eloquence is in mere action any more than it is in mere words; in

both instances there must be an accent which makes itself felt, that which Cicero means when he defines eloquence to be “a continuous movement of the soul.” We will here, at the risk of repeating ourselves from a previous work,* give two illustrations of what we mean, the first from that illustrious master of sacred assemblies, Dr. Chalmers. Dr. John Brown, in that delicious book the “*Horæ Subsecivæ*,” gives an instance of his listening to this great Scotch orator when he was only a youth in the High School of Edinburgh. It was in a wild moorland district on a summer evening ; Brown and some of his fellow-students, bright, gay, thoughtless lads, fascinated by the charm of the great name, had walked over to the kirk among the moors. “As we entered the kirk, we saw a notorious character, a drover, who had much of the brutal look of what he worked in, with the knowing eye of a man of the city, a sort of big Peter Bell.

“ ‘There was a hardness in his cheek ;
There was a hardness in his eye.’

“ He was our terror ; and we not only wondered at, but were afraid of him, when we saw him going in. The minister came in, homely in his dress and gait, but having a great look about him like a mountain among hills. The tide set in. Everything aided its power ; deep called unto deep. How astonished and impressed we all were ! He was at the full thunder of his power ; the whole man was in an agony of earnestness. The drover was weeping like a child, the tears were running down his ruddy, coarse cheeks, his face opened out and

* “World of Proverb and Parable.”

smoothed like an infant, his whole body stirred with emotion, and when the wonderful speaker sat down how beautiful to our eyes did the thunderer look. We went home quieter than we came ; we thought of other things, that voice, that face, those great, simple, living thoughts, those flows of resistless eloquence, that piercing, shattering voice."

This is a fine description of what we have sometimes called the Trollhatten style of eloquence—eloquence leaping in its zigzag, rushing, shattering impetuosity from the high rocks above, whirling, crashing, careering, and eddying along. How singular ! including in its pulsation of passion, and bearing along by its power, the rough drover of the Lammermuirs and the gentle, sensitive, cultivated youth, who well knew what a holy life and all highest preaching was, as himself the son of one of the most accomplished preachers and scholars in the Edinburgh of his day.

Well, then, take another instance which may be spoken of as a pendant to that given by the author of the "*Horæ*." We remember to have heard a dear departed friend tell how, when a boy, he was taken by his father, one still summer evening, across the Northamptonshire fields,—we believe it was to the little village town of Thrapstone,—to hear Robert Hall. It was one of the old Puritan village chapels, with the square galleries. As in the instance of Chalmers, the place was crowded with plain farmer folk and a sprinkling of intelligent ministers and gentry from the neighbourhood. The minister came in, a simple, heavy, but still impressive-looking man, one whose presence compelled you to

look at him. In due course he announced his text : "The end of all things is at hand ; be sober, and watch unto prayer." Quite unlike Chalmers, his voice was not shattering, but thin and weak. There was no action at all, only a kind of nervous twitching of the fingers, more especially as the hand moved to and rested upon the lower part of the back, where the speaker was suffering almost incessant pain. A he went on beneath the deepening evening shades, falling through the windows of the old chapel, his voice first chained, then charmed and fascinated his hearers one after another ; the whole place seemed as if beneath a great spell. As he talked about "the end" the spell upon the people seemed to begin to work itself out into an awful fearful restlessness ; first one, then another, rose from their seats, and stood stretching forward with a kind of fright and wonder. Still there was no action, only the following on of that thin voice, with a marvellous witchery of apt and melodious words ; but through them "the end of all things" sounded like the tolling of some warning bell. More people rose, stretching forward ; many of those who rose first, as if they felt some strange power upon them,—they knew not what,—got up and stood upon their seats until, when the great master ceased, closing his passionate and pathetic accents, the whole audience was upon its feet, intensely alive with interest, as if each one had heard in the distance the presages and preludes of the coming end, and felt it was time to prepare. Our friend used to speak of that never-forgotten moment, that summer evening in the old chapel, as one of the most memorable in his life.

Thus, if we have spoken of the eloquence of Chalmers as a kind of Trollhatten Fall, Hall's, on the other hand, was a kind of Niagara in its vast breadth and body, in its measured, nervous, and—shall we use the word?—even monotonous cadence. We are not in this saying which was the greater, only that the modes of their eloquence were so different, but in each fulfilling, it seems, to the utmost, the definition of Cicero: “a continuous movement of soul.” Certainly they both wielded the sceptre of speech from the throne of eloquence; of such eloquence, we suppose, we have no living examples. And, after all, eloquence must depend, not upon the orator alone, but upon the auditor; and in all the great and impassioned successes of oratory, the auditor may say to the orator, “Half is mine and half is thine.” And faith in unseen things, in an unseen world lying round about us, is now at a great remove as compared with what it was to either the audience in the Lammermuirs, or in the Northamptonshire village. More than ever in any previous age of the world, the man in the pulpit finds that he has an adversary in the man in the pew. Even the coarse drover had probably no barrier to put up against the preacher except his wicked life, and that, the fervent earnestness of the preacher overcame, and he found his conscience arrested and his feelings wrought upon. The hearer's emotions really assisted the preacher's words.

It may be questioned whether purely intellectual preaching, preaching which merely reasons and refines, has ever had this power. In the instances to which we have referred it was the soul within the

speaker which made his words move through the souls of other men, as with the power of a necromancer. Such eloquence as we have in our own day seems never to rise, or to be of this order, although worthy of that characterization given by one of our recent poets, although we could never see its justice as applied to the statesman to whom the lines were a compliment—

“ An eloquence not like those *rills* from a height
Which sparkle, and foam, and in vapour are o'er,
But a torrent that works out its way into light
Through the filtering recesses of thought and of lore.”

Ah! those “filtering recesses of thought and of lore” are impediments to that eloquence which speaks immediately to the soul, and to those movements in the atmosphere of the mind which create tempests of feeling in the hearer.

In another chapter we may return to this topic of the adjustment of the claims of the intellect and the feelings in the pulpit ; meantime we have glanced at some of those reasons, or, shall we say, those prerogatives which constitute the pulpit the throne of eloquence. The pulpit is the apocalypse of the soul. It is nothing if it do not deal with supernatural forces and supernatural truths. It handles invisible things as seen, and supersensuous things as felt. We should be open to suspicion if we were to claim for the pulpit such a place as the ancients gave to their secular oratory, a place among the fine arts ; in the most illustrious masters of pulpit power, in Massillon and Bossuet, in Chalmers and Hall, the powers of the poet, of music, and the drama have combined. We repeat it, the man in

the pulpit is permitted to enter the charmed circle of the poet and the musician. Of course he is a metaphysician, for he fetches his motive powers from invisible worlds, while all around him lie, prompt to obey his bidding and his call, the presences of all the continents “of the things which are seen and temporal”; he may, if he be able, press into his service all the territories and continents of nature; over them all he may sway the sceptre. What an elevation for his throne! While round the bar, the senate, and the lecture hall rage the passions of to-day, this is as the telephone of eternity speaking in the ear of time, while the visions it unveils are as the firmament of heaven in its clearness.

If we have seen few of these things in the achievements of the pulpit, we shall, in turn, remind the reader that every artist painter is not a Raphael or a Turner; but men are proud of and own the achievements in their art, they look up. Every poet is not a Dante nor a Shakespeare, but he looks up to them, and thinks of the great things the poet has done. Every sculptor is not a Thorwaldsen, but he looks up to him, and thinks of the great things his art has done. In every noble art it is a great thing for the student to look up; so the man who believes in the pulpit, and in its message, should look up to its

“Dead but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns.”

But the course of our remarks may have conveyed the idea that in pulpit eloquence, for all legitimate effect, action is to be deprecated; not so. God’s

ministry goes on by various means, ordinary and extraordinary ; that is the difference between rivers and rains, between dews and lightnings, but the rivers and the dews are exhaled by the sun, and return to the earth both as rains and lightnings.

The traditions of Wesleyan Methodism in England are fond of recalling the scenery of Gwennap Pit, in the county of Cornwall. It was one of John Wesley's most magnificent pulpits ; "it was a cove, a huge recess," a natural amphitheatre, its walls rising several thousand feet in height. It was capable of holding from twenty-five to thirty thousand persons. This was one of Wesley's most famous churches, a vast Byzantine cathedral among the wild moors ; once a year, at any rate, Wesley preached in it ; he preached his first sermon there in the year 1762, his last, at the age of eighty-six, in 1789 ; and there, from year to year, they poured in from the country round to listen to the voice of the grey father, as he stood on a projecting crag, a pulpit reared by nature, from whence he commanded the mighty crowd. The vast space was filled with rugged miners and fishermen, of whom it had been said they never breathed a prayer, except for the special providence of a shipwreck, who, as the Cornish wreckers, with wicked barbarity had kindled delusive lights along the coast to allure unfortunate ships to the rugged cliffs. But the sceptre of the pulpit had passed over them with a spell of Divine power ; and now they were there, miners and smugglers who had never used God's name except as an oath, these with men and their families, less savage but not less ignorant, from their shielings

and low farmsteads on the distant heath. So they came to gladden the heart of the old patriarch on the wild glen, a strange spot, and not unbeautiful, roofed over by the blue heavens. Amidst the yellow broom, the twittering birds, the incense of heath flower, and the scantling of trees, amidst the venerable rocks, it must have been wonderful to hear thirty thousand voices welling up, and singing Wesley's own words, written for them—

“Suffice that, for the season past,
Hell's horrid language filled our tongues ;
We all Thy words behind us cast,
And rudely sang the drunkard's songs.
But, oh ! the power of grace Divine,
In hymns we now our voices raise,
Loudly in strange hosannahs join,
And blasphemies are turned to praise.”

That crag rising from the midst of Gwennap Pit has always seemed to us a throne of pulpit eloquence.

But what shall we say of that singular apparition, that lightning flash in the shape of a man, Whitefield ? He fell into no grooves of church routine or life, and he attempted to form none ; he was a voice and nothing more. Like Elijah or the Baptist, he came like thunder, and departed, leaving, even as the mighty singers leave, the tradition of a tone, almost

“ Like lightning
Which doth cease to be e'er you can say
It lightens ! ”

He sprang before the world, ready armed, as a youth at the age of twenty. Singular how many of these great preachers forbid us to despise their youth,

like Bossuet, William Jay, Thomas Spencer, Charles H. Spurgeon, and others. Whitefield finished his course in the prime of life. He seems almost to realise, if we can realise, the idea of an abstract soul. Read his words, they are nothing ; but those words uttered by him shattered men, broke down, overwhelmed, and dissolved all prejudices. What must he have been to whom such strong men, highly cultured men, such sceptical, inaccessible men as Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, David Hume, David Garrick, and Benjamin Franklin were as "tow," and he as a "spark" to kindle all into a consuming flame, a mysterious and marvellous creature, an entire soul of all-embracing love and compassion ? He fulfilled that great condition of all true oratory. He was a whole man to one thing at one time, equally at home in preaching in the select saloons of the Countess of Huntingdon to dukes, duchesses, and congregations of peers, or to the wildest and most furious and even murderous mobs. Whitefield is a mystery to us ; he seems to burn with an incandescent heat, so that words shrivel and are as nothing before that pure, ingenuous, generous, and wholly consecrated soul. Yet the melody of that full, clear, all-encompassing voice, varying to every passionate accent, sinking to the most pathetic, swelling to the most rousing apostrophe, and, in the full careering heat of his speech, becoming all unconsciously to himself poet, philosopher, psychologist, bard, everything, this enables us to understand something of his stupendous power, while we are perplexed at its cause. No melody of poetry shines through the words of his published discourses,

but no pictures of whispered rapt oratory inflame so much as those we meet in Whitefield's preaching. Compared with him, the mightiest orators we have heard or known seem only talkers. It was the same everywhere, on the breast of the mountain, the trees, and hedges full of people, hushed to profound silence, the open firmament above him, the prospect of adjacent fields, the sight of thousands on thousands of people, some on horseback, and all affected or drenched in tears. Sometimes evening approaches ; then he says, "Beneath the twilight it was too much for me, and quite overcame me." There was one night never to be forgotten ; it lightened exceedingly ; his spirit rose with the tempest ; he preached the warnings and the consolations of the coming of the Son of man. The thunder broke over his head ; the lightning shone along the preacher's path ; it ran along the ground in wild glares from one part of heaven to the other ; the whole audience shook like the leaves of a forest in the wind, while he exclaimed, in the full pathetic majesty of his wonderful voice, "Oh, my friends ! the wrath of God ! the wrath of God !" Then his spirit rose higher, and passed right through the tempest, and he told how he longed for the time when Christ should be revealed in flaming fire. "Oh," exclaimed he, "that my soul may be in a like flame when He shall come to call me !"

" To him, in the painful stress
Of zeal on fire from its own excess,
Heaven seemed so vast, and earth so small,
That man was nothing, since God was all."

This would be all imperfect—is, perhaps, imperfect

—if we did not remember that the world can well afford a prophet, his soul all on fire and ablaze with zeal for the Lord of hosts, coming down from his rapt communions and Divine and illuminating perceptions. He may well be hailed, when it is known that man is in a state of fearful aberration from the rectitude and purity of the Divine law ; the immense lapse in the one instance may well permit the fearful thunders of Ezekiel or Nahum to roll in the other, and preaching never becomes the voice of inspiration to startle and alarm until the infiniteness of Divine law and the infinite consequences of its infractions are perceived.

Of Whitefield, John Newton said, “I bless God that I have lived in his time ; many were the winter mornings I have got up at four to attend his Tabernacle discourses at five ; and I have seen Moorfields as full of lanterns at these times as I suppose the Haymarket is full of flambeaux on an opera night. As a preacher, if any man were to ask me who was the second I ever had heard, I should be at some loss ; but in regard to the first, Mr. Whitefield exceeded so far every other man of my time that I should be at none. He was the original of popular preaching, and all our popular ministers are only his copies.”

And is it unnatural ? Is it only in the material and natural world that lightnings and thunders roll and rend, only in the lower heavens that their furies are seen to play ? Highest minds have not judged so—the mind has its tempests which, like tragical Titans, tear the heavens, and seem to pluck down judgments—and Whitefield rent men’s souls

as he stood and cried, "Oh, my friends ! the wrath of God ! the wrath of God !"

But let us invite to a *scene*. Let us step into the famous old Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road in London, one of those vast, plain, square buildings our Puritan forefathers loved to erect. See, who are gathered here this evening ? What a mass ! what an audience ! Behind, yonder, in the gallery, see that face, on which philosophic calm seems to struggle with imaginative sensuousness, the sceptic lip, fastidious and cold ; that is David Hume, master of English diction, apostle of atheism and fatalistic necessity, the historian of England, who has also a whole webwork of tentative theologic enigmas and impossibilities in his brain. Yonder, elegantly lounging, is the epicurean sneerer Horace Walpole, the Earl of Orford, novelist and virtuoso, who, somewhat rudely, affects indifference to the preacher, and especially disgust at the place. And see,—ah ! there is our old friend burly Samuel Johnson in yonder aisle ; he arrives somewhat late, and has to pay the penalty. The leviathan of literature, the monarch and dictator now to the whole world of letters, attracted hither by the fame of his fellow-student ; and do our eyes deceive us ? no, by his side his companion Sir Joshua Reynolds, with his immortal ear trumpet, and dear old Goldsmith ; they are here to snatch lessons which may serve them in a very different world. See, there, intensely interested, are two whom you ought to know ; that short man, straining forward through the press, is the English Roscius, the greatest master of mingled tragic and comic emotion the stage has ever known,

Garrick, and by his side Shuter, the prince of melodramatic comedy, who has confessed to something more than curiosity, and has acknowledged affectingly the power of the preacher in striking light through his being, but who cannot cast the world behind his back and say, "Thou art an offence unto me." Did you ask if bishops ever came? Yes, there is Warburton yonder, who has left his wig and apron behind him, impelled by irresistible curiosity, advised to come by his friend Philip Doddridge; but not a little savage is that most surly and bad-tempered of prelates to find a work done which throws all the pomp of his truly vast scholarship into the shade. You should notice that old lady in the plain and quite unfashionable but neat head-dress beneath the unpretentious bonnet, and in her invariable black silk gown. Who? Oh, that is the Countess of Huntingdon, who has compelled a large party this evening to listen to her chaplain. The old gentleman, in the corner opposite to her, is at every service here; this chapel is his constant place of worship, but he has a name in history; he is the loved and valued friend of George the Third; it is Pulteney, the celebrated Earl of Bath, once Robert Walpole's great antagonist; and by his side the Earl of Dartmouth, to whom dear John Newton owes his episcopal ordination, and, by-and-by, his rectory of Olney. And there is a brilliant cluster of court ladies, Lady Fanny Shirley, and Lady Chesterfield, and, for this time, that arch old plotter Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, wondering if the preacher may have anything to say to her proud hungry heart. But is it not wonderful that

the man, who has brought together all these strangely incongruous elements of literature and fashion, should also have brought William Romaine, Augustus Toplady, John Fletcher, and William Cowper? And what can have brought Chesterfield, Lord Chesterfield, here?—the high-priest of artifice and politeness, the cold and courtly author of those letters which, if we be not depraved when we begin to read, will effectually give to us so much forbidden fruit that depraved we certainly shall be ere we close the volumes.

The singing is over, and there is Whitefield! And does that slender, middle-sized, unimposing man know the audience to whom he speaks? Does he know that he speaks in the parliament of letters, of theology, of fashion, of statesmanship? Does he know that before him are hundreds of men and women whose words are law on all the 'matters pertaining to their own worlds'? Yes, he knows it; he is amazed at their presence, but he cares not for it. The masters of taste find that this man obeys none of their laws or canons; his lightnings leap over their narrow boundaries, and the masters of fashion are compelled to own that the innkeeper's son has somewhere learnt a grace and harmony not to be acquired from the schools of Paris. "I would give a twelvemonth's income," whispers Garrick, "to be able to lift my handkerchief like that." "It is worth going forty miles to hear him pronounce the word Mesopotamia!"

Hush! no need to say that; the whole audience is hushed, is breathless; of what is he talking? The madness, the folly, the blind depravity of the

sinner ; that then is the subject. And he is describing the wanderings of a poor blind beggar—not a very attractive subject for the Humes and Walpoles and Chesterfields—a poor blind beggar, led by a dog, the image of the merely natural reason without the light of revelation ; a poor blind beggar, wandering in a dark, wild night through cold and rain and tempest. The poor wanderer wends his way till at last he reaches the edge of a fearful cliff and precipice ; he does not know the dread and danger beneath ; he does not know that death is there,—that abyss ! His dog is not faithless, but he has lost his way ; he does not know, the night is very dark, and the dog has taken the fatal step ; he is over the cliff, but still the poor blind man holds on ; another step, another step——

“ GOOD HEAVENS ! HE’S GONE ! SAVE HIM, WHITEFIELD ! ”

From whence did that come?—those words that thrilled and rang through the chapel, and broke the peroration of the description. Whence ? From a rustic, and all those scholars and peers smile contemptuously ? Not so ; from Chesterfield’s pew ! from Chesterfield himself!—that cold and heartless follower of fashion, whose motto for all society was *Nil admirari*, whose prime article of creed it was to school and discipline all the passions and the feelings so that they should never be observed ; he it was ; he was quite oblivious, he knew not where he was, but, carried away and carried along by the pathos of the speaker, he too was in the dark and lonely night, near the blind beggar on the cliff, and is it not sad that he did not see himself in the blind

beggar, his proud reason at best a faithful but benighted dog, pity that he did not cry to Whitefield's Master to save the wandering and worldly peer? But surely we shall not doubt that this plain old pulpit, in that plain chapel, in the dim light of candles struggling through the gloom, was truly a throne of eloquence.*

* It need not be supposed that all these well-known persons were at one and the same time in Tottenham Court Road Chapel; but they all heard Whitefield, and they all left substantially that impression which this description conveys; it was first published in *The Lamps of the Temple*, 1856.

CHAPTER II.

TONGUES OF FIRE.

THE reader will remember that in the parable of the great dreamer there is introduced a town, of all the towns in the world the most wonderful, the most ancient, the most powerful, the most glorious. Other towns have churches and cathedrals, but there would have been no churches nor cathedrals but for this town. Other towns have castles, moats, and fortifications, but there would have been no fortifications, no castles, nor bastions, but for this town. Other towns have their senate houses, parliaments, halls, judicial courts, majesties, and thrones, but they are all the shadows falling from the buildings of this town. Other towns have had their battle scenes, and the war has waged through their streets, the shock of the lightnings of strife blazed over their fields; but all the passions of the battlefield had their origin in this town. Other towns have their palaces, but there is no palace so beautiful and so brave as the palace of this town, none with furniture so rich, none with glory so brave or great or subduing. We need not say it is the Town of Mansoul.

Now this town lies open to *the sea*—the wonderful sea; the sea flows down to it through the rivers and the bays; all its wealth, like that of

more modern towns, lies in its neighbourhood to the sea. Strange land lies all around it, but it lies open to the great world to which it belongs by five ports, the Cinque Ports, the ports themselves beautifully constructed, and yet as nothing to the wealth they convey. All the merchandise of pictures, of charming furnitures, and all merchandise of music, of organs, of viols, and of harps, and all merchandise of spices and precious gems, and all merchandise of clothing and food, all come hither, borne in by the wondrous waves that flow up to the gates of those ports of the town of Mansoul, "Five gates," said John Bunyan: "Ear Gate, Eye Gate, Nose Gate, Mouth Gate, and Feel Gate, *but the greatest of these is Ear Gate.*"

Preachers have to do with Ear Gate. But often the people in this town of Mansoul are all asleep over the whole town, as if it were an enchanted palace. The people within are wonderful people, but you can do nothing with them until they are awake. One of the first of all conditions is to awaken the people in the town of Mansoul. There is a well-known story in the history of one of our earliest English kings, Richard of the Lionheart. On his way from the Holy Land he was taken captive, and imprisoned in a dreary castle away from his nation. At last, in the hands of his enemies, while wonder was dying fast, and he was perishing from the memory of mankind, he was discovered in a strange manner. He had a favourite minstrel, Blondel, who knew that his master and his king was confined in some cell in a castle among dark mountains and forests; he travelled from one to the other waking

at the dungeon bars some well-loved melodies from his harp ; at last the strain from the harp without was answered by the king from within down in the dungeon. The song and the harp of the minstrel thus became the means of the emancipation of the prince. Thus the king regained his throne, and escaped from the horrors of his exile, by the stray and floating air which had carelessly whiled away his hours in the camp or in the lightsome gaieties of the palace. All Europe was interested in the listening ear of the thrilled king to the lucid melodies of the faithful bard.

Thus the spirit of man sits like a captive king in a dungeon, until the voice of the Divine music wakes echoes hitherto unknown along his prison-house, and stirs him with new knowledge, new consciousness. We know the mighty power of music, through which we are, perhaps, most nearly related to an invisible and spiritual world. Mighty, too, is the power of a Divine word when the heart knows it and owns it ; then “the captive exile hasteth to be loosed.” The senses are the bars of the prison. Behind then, and within every body, there is a soul. God can make the words answer a Divine purpose. Preaching and all its auxiliaries are only useful to us as they do for the soul what Blondel did for the king Richard : waken within him memory or hope, rousing him to thoughts of a world beyond his prison bars, beyond his exile, wakening him to effort, to listen, and to aspire, and every minister should be as a Blondel seeking for imprisoned kings, alas ! contented with their chains, or sitting, perhaps, in despair, in their dungeons till the magic chords

stir their being. This is the mission of the tongue of fire, to call on imagination, on memory, on attention, and on thought, and a word may do it even as we read the Shields of Miltiades would not permit Themistocles to sleep.

First of all, the question will be asked, What do you mean by the tongue of fire? We will attempt in one word to give the answer; we mean *unction*.

The mediæval legends and monkish stories lurking about in the Church of the Dark Ages were many of them, without a doubt, foolish enough; but some of them are evidently constructed and told with a wise and scarcely hidden purpose. We know of none more singular than the very well-known story of the strange friar who appeared in a certain monastery, and was requested by the abbot to preach in the church. The strange friar went into the pulpit, and astonished the Brothers and the entire congregation. His discourse produced a profound impression; he descanted on the doom of the lost until the blood of the Brothers curdled. Altogether it was a very wonderful discourse, and the strange friar stepped from the pulpit amidst the awestruck glancings of the people, whose amazement he had inspired. But, saith the legend, the old abbot was not taken in; following the strange friar, he discovered that he was the veritable enemy of mankind, the real Frater Diabolus. He expressed to the preacher his wonder that he should talk in such a strain. "Think you," exclaimed the devil, "that my sermon would have the effect of teaching one hearer to shun eternal damnation?" The devil sneered at the old abbot as he said, "I made them

all shiver ; I did not make one of them weep ! Think you that great knowledge and great eloquence are of any use *without great unction* ? My sermon was a great sermon, but it would do me no harm. It had no *unction*." "Therefore," said St. Augustine of his own preaching and his audience, "I did not think I had accomplished anything till I saw them in tears ; their acclamations showed me they were delighted, their tears showed me they were persuaded."

Unction then is the tongue of fire, and it is just the very gift which no universities, no degrees, no amount of learning or critical attainment, no cultivation of the science of *belles lettres*, or rhetoric, or elocution can bestow. In contrast with the wild old legend we have just quoted, there is another story, but this a true one, and not a mere legend. A certain bishop, eminent not only as a preacher, but for his purity and his piety, his gentle kindness and meek wisdom, had to preach in a certain great church, and he had to travel very far to fulfil his engagement. When he arrived he was wearied and unwell, too ill to speak, and he begged that some one might be appointed to occupy his place in the pulpit. "No," said the dean or the minister of the church, "only you go up into the pulpit, and sit down, and look at the people, and then come away." It may be presumed that the old bishop gave his benediction, but the story tells how hearts were touched, how the people burst into tears, because, says the narrator of the story, he was a man of such pure devotion, and "he who prays much is filled with a power of touching souls which is quite inexplicable." There goes forth from such a nature a

subtle charm and influence, such a man has felt the "powers of the world to come," and from such a nature even broken and unrhetorical words have been proved to produce effects even where mighty masterpieces have failed. But when the tongue of fire sits upon, or uses as its vehicle, a high intelligence, when large powers are chambers through which celestial lights and fires stream, when language, thought, and imagination are equally and alike enkindled, it surely is not unnatural to expect effects and influences corresponding to the magnificent vocation. The best history of the pulpit, then, is the story of the tongue of fire, from that moment when we read of the "cloven tongues of flame" sitting on the brows of apostolic men, beneath whose consecrating touch they went forth, all of them, inspired to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. It seems only possible in this way to account for the amazing number of startling episodes in the history of the Church, in the ages of the Church of Rome as well as in the Protestant countries and times.

Why, this tongue of fire wrought out just the very creed we utter in all our churches. It was the word, not of an Athanasius nor of an Aquinas, but of a bold, sharp, simple tongue. We know the story. But in the story of the Council of Nice there are two incidents which, for the humour of the one and the happy teaching of the other, deserve to be borne in mind. It is said of Nicolay, Bishop of Myra, when Arius was propounding his heresies to the Council, that the Bishop, quite impatient of all argument, lifted his fist and gave to the great

heresiarch a smart box on the ear, a most impressive argument, and in spirit often followed since. But the more happy incident is that related of Spiridion, a rude shepherd. We are told that disputes were running high, and the philosophers were sounding on their perilous way; when, before one of the chief archdisputants, there limped the shepherd Spiridion; he had but one eye, and he had a limping leg; he had lost the use of both in the heroism of martyrdom for the faith, and now abruptly he broke in, and said, "Christ and His apostles left us not a system of logic nor a vain deceit, but a simple truth, to be guarded by faith and good works." Turning full upon the disputants, especially one Eulogius, nicknamed Fair Speech, he said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, hear me, philosophers; there is one God, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible, who made all things by the word of His power and by the holiness of His Holy Spirit; this word, by which name we call the Son of God, took compassion on men for their wanderings astray and for their savage condition, and chose to be born of a woman, and to converse with men, and to die for them; and He shall come to judge every one for the things done in life. These things we believe, without curious inquiry. Cease, then, from the vain labours of seeking proofs against what is established by faith and the manner in which these things may be or may not be, but, if thou believest, answer at once the questions as I put them to you."

The philosopher was struck dumb by this new mode of argument. He could only reply in a

general way that he assented. "Then," answered the old man, "if thou believest, rise, and follow me to the Lord's house, and receive the sign of this faith." The philosopher was staggered; he turned to the crowd of his disciples and said, "Hear me, my learned friends. So long as it was a matter of words to words, whatever was opposed I overthrew by my skill in speaking; but when, in place of words, *power* came out of the speaker's lips, words could no longer resist power, man could no longer resist power! If any of you feel as I have felt, let him believe in Christ, and follow this old man through whom God has spoken!" And does not this story illustrate what we mean by the tongue of fire and what we desire the power of the preacher to be, the magnetic power of earnestness and its simplicity over argument and speculation?

We have said the tongue of fire is the power of pathos and the command of tears. We can trace thus the progress of this tongue of fire in many instances, and through many ages. St. Bernard seems to us to have eminently possessed the tongue of fire; he must have been a great preacher, but to him we will devote a separate chapter.

In many stories in the history of the Church, those words seem fulfilled, "I will make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf, and they shall devour all the people round about on the right hand and on the left." Thus the tongue of fire has often swept over a city like a real consuming flame; and ought we not to expect it to be so when we

read, “Is not My word as a fire?” What a moment was that in Florence, in 1495, when *Il Frati*, the Brother, as Savonarola was called, was preaching! Judged by any test, he was a wonderful preacher; he had mighty auxiliaries, to be sure, to aid him: the terror of the plague, the shadow of the pestilence, apparently approaching, the fear of the French army, surely marching on to invade; but Italian historians, like Guicciardini, pause in their narrative to express their wonder at the voice of the great preacher of St. Mark’s. St. Mark’s Church was much larger then than that which many of us have visited; but to that church, night after night, the whole city crowded to hear the monk’s exposition of the building of the ark and the judgment of the flood; and on the night on which he announced that text “Behold, I will bring the waters over the earth,” it is said it was as if a thunderclap burst over the city; read what that sermon was in the ancient pages of Vasari or the modern pages of Trollope, the historian of Florence. The well-known Florentine Pico della Mirandola, who was present, said afterwards that a shudder passed through all his frame, and his hair stood on end as he listened. Florence was at that time probably the most dissolute nook in all Europe. Even its high artistic tastes were cultivated to the extreme of depravity; but before this preaching, at any rate while it lasted, it all went down, and Vasari, the charming biographer of Italian artists, tells how the wanton pictures, music, sculptures, and paintings were all gathered and burned in an immense *auto da fé*, in the great square of Florence. The scathings of the

preacher's tremendous eloquence swept swiftly all around, and immoral popes, priests, magistrates, artists, and poets, were alike all scorched and consumed by words which burn even now, as we read them, on the cold paper. At last they burnt the bold preacher himself. The Pope fulfilled his promise made when Savonarola refused a Cardinal's hat. "Then," said he, "the Brother shall have a martyr's crown!" As one of the bishops said in condemning him, "Let us send him to death; a miserable friar more or less is of small consequence." "I separate thee," said the Bishop of Vasova, in pronouncing the sentence of ecclesiastical degradation, "from the Church militant." "From the Church militant you may," answered the preacher, "but not from the Church triumphant; that is not given to thee." The words, like others of dying martyrs, have remained in the hearts of men ever since. The story of Savonarola is a wonderful chapter in the history of these tongues of fire, and the pulpit of St. Mark's Church was a throne of eloquence.

But not merely to recapitulate instances, shall we employ some pages in remarking on the vehicle for the tongue of fire? The meditation upon the tongue of fire is an invocation to the sanctification of speech, and it compels to reflection on that sublime account of the origin of speech,* when Moses said unto the Lord, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent.... I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the

* Exod. iv. 11.

seeing, or the blind ? have not I, the Lord ? now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say.” As the faculty of speech especially distinguishes man from the other inhabitants of the earth, so sacred speech especially distinguishes the Christian man from other men. Speech is a Divine endowment ; on the tongue of fire it is especially a sacred gift. “Who hath made man’s mouth ? have not I ? saith the Lord.” Mr. Darwin, as readers will remember, in the second volume of the “Descent of Man,” and on the fifty-eighth page, confesses himself especially perplexed ; he is compelled to admit that the mere law of evolution is insufficient, and to admit that speech suggests the idea of special contrivances ; and the very eminent philologist, our great English scholar, Max Müller, has chosen this as the ground on which to resist the Darwinian hypothesis of mind considered as a mode of matter and material evolution : “Who hath made man’s mouth ? have not I ? saith the Lord.” If we debate the question as to whether the speech or the pen has exerted most influence over the domains of thought and the progress of the human mind, it must be admitted at once that speech fetches forth the precognitive idea, and gives to it its appropriate sign.

Speech is the morning of the mind ; it is the Eothen, the dawn ; it is the Eocene period in the history of the soul ; speech is the identification of that intelligence by which the enchanting images and ideas, which were dark and buried in the mind, are spread abroad ; it is “like morning spread upon the mountains.” *Speech* is the glorious endowment

which constitutes the bard, the poet, the orator, the singer, in a word the namer ; but, being this, it touches *two* worlds, a world which is around us, which we can see and analyse, the world of the pen ; but it touches also the world which rises out of definitions into undefinable emotions. Hence speech makes us conscious of that surprise power which has been said to be one of the most eminent faculties of the tongue of fire. "Gentlemen," said Fichte, as he went into his class one morning, "I want you to *think, the wall, that wall.* Have you thought the wall ? Now I want you to *think the man that thought the wall !*" It was his way of compelling his student to separate the consciousness itself from that mere knowledge by which the consciousness became conscious. We wake to consciousness through words ; we become aware of ourselves ; it is by speech, by spoken words, we learn to discriminate what we are from what we see and from what we touch. Hence it is by *speech* we

"Enter the sacred temple of the breast,
And walk and gaze about an honoured guest."

Speech is the naming of the universe and all its furniture. *Speech* it is by which men are related to each other, by which we enter each other's minds, and by which we become aware of the minds of the masters of our race. And not only so. *Speech* is the wonderful and august power by which we catch the fleeting fancies of the mind, the aerial visitants of thought and feeling ; and, as imagination bodies them forth, we detain them, and give to them

"A local habitation and a name."

And all this is done before the Pen begins its work. Speech on the Tongue has its sceptre in the present generation ; Speech in the Pen is like the sceptre in the hand of a dead prince : it is wielded over generations yet to come, who yet are moulded by the living word. How vainly we strive to realise on the dead page and the printers' words either Pericles' or Chatham's tongue of fire. Far be it from us to deprecate the power of the Pen ; but almost its best commendation is that it records the victories of the tongues of fire. Great historians, we often think, remind us of the judicial power of the Pen ; in their hands it becomes a true sceptre ; it is mightier than the sword, mightier than the globe grasped by the monarch, the symbol of dominion and rule ; it is the true arbiter, and the monarchs and emperors of past ages wait upon its awards. The Pen confers immortality on princes ; when the hand is paralysed, and the ploughshare has passed over the place where once stood the throne of an illustrious dynasty, the Pen will preserve the name of the prince in the literary and historic archives. The Pen writes down the deeds of the great captain, whose sword swept like lightning round the nations in his day ; he is not only conquered by death, he is conquered by the Pen. His place in history waits on its award. Is it not very strange to think how we little men sit in judgment on the crimes and the careers of men who would have made us tremble, who made the whole world tremble while they lived ? Why, nothing can make Macaulay think of the great Marlborough but as a mean miser, a treason-hatching traitor, who bought

a place of power by the sale of his sister's honour, who maintained it by involving his country in debt that he might pocket the gains, who sold one sovereign and was preparing to sell another. Yes, the Pen enables us to say that. Thus the Pen, the awful Pen, sits like an avenging fate upon the memories of men and seals them with its irreversible seal. Is it not powerful? is it not as wonderful as powerful? You see a prince like our Henry the Eighth, with the intellectuality of a man and the will of a beast. You see a man like Philip the Second of Spain or James the Second of England, who, in the menagerie of kings, may pass for hyenas. You see creatures like the Duke d'Alva, like Bonner, like Jeffries. These men could make, *did* make, gloried in making poor weak women tremble. You figure them with bloodshot eye, and white-lipped or lipless mouths, and cruel tusks and teeth, glaring and champing over their thwarted will, or standing gloating over the bleeding corpse of their victim. How indignant you feel! Be quiet, be quiet; History has them all safe; they are bound in the Chains of the Pen; they cannot, they shall not get free; they are fast. In the day of their power how they would have sneered at the poor Grub-street crew! Who so contemptible as the poet, the historian, the chronicler? Him! neither gartered nor starred nor titled! Him! Conciliate him! No. Away with him! Put him in the pillory, in the stocks, in prison. Away with him to the quartering knife of the hangman! See Defoe standing, in fact, in the pillory, and composing a song in honour of it! See old Johnson, scourged at the cart's tail through the

streets of London ! See Alice Lisle, venerable and glorious matron, led to the block ! See Elizabeth Gaunt, sweet-hearted woman, led to the stake only for daring to give bread to the hungry ! See Bunyan in prison for twelve years, and George Fox in nearly all the prisons in England ! See Vane, and Russell, and Sydney before the block ! Be quiet, be quiet ! suppress your indignation ; the memory of the victim and the tyrant are both in the keeping of the Pen. Your Pen is the true lord keeper of the consciences of all ages. It is the Pen that haunts and dogs the steps of tyrants with the everlasting scream of execration ; the Pen raises against them the avenging hiss. The Pen, in the hands of one they would have treated with contempt or ignominiously consigned to a cruel doom, is their judge, jury, sentence, and executioner ! *

And we repeat all this because it is supposed that we have reached a day when the Pen has quite eclipsed the pulpit ; it is said that men take up the productions of the Pen with all their faculties awake for enjoyment, but the pulpit has become a weariness ; but can it be, then, that, somehow, the fire which once glowed in the pulpit has been transferred to the Pen ? Has the Pen become, as the pulpit has ceased to be, a tongue of fire ? It was with reference to this that the greatest teacher of our times, Thomas Carlyle, said, "That a man stand in a pulpit, and speak of spiritual things

* I have thought it not impertinent to the purpose of this chapter to quote this passage from my "Thomas Carlyle, Thinker, Theologian, Historian, and Poet."

to man. It is beautiful! Even in its great obscurity and decadence, it is among the beautifulst, most touching objects one sees on the earth. This speaking man has, indeed, in these times wandered terribly from the point, has, alas! as it were, totally lost sight of the point. Yet, at bottom, whom have we to compare with him? Of all public functionaries boarded and lodged on the industry of modern Europe, is there one worthier of the board he has, a man even professing, and never so languidly making, still endeavour to save the souls of men? I wish he could find the point again, this speaking one, and stick to it with deadly energy, for there is need of him yet. Could he but find the point again, take the old spectacles off his nose, and, looking up, discover what the real Satan, the world-devouring devil, now is! Will he discover our real Satans whom he has to fight, or go on droning, through his old horn spectacles, about old extinct Satans, and never see the real one till he feel him at his throat and ours? I wish the speaking one could find his point again." This is certain: until he shall find his point there will be no real unction, no tongue of fire. Where, then, is its point of contact for kindling the flame?

Daniel Webster, the great American orator, who was a statesman and not a preacher, used to say, "Preachers should take a text from St. Paul, and preach from the newspapers." Luther was asked how he preached so successfully. Luther's audience was very frequently composed of scholars and the magnates of society, but he replied, "I do not preach in a way to suit learned men and magistrates,

but I always try to preach so as to suit the poor women, the children, and the servants." And Wesley used to say to his preachers, "Use the most common, little, easy words in the language." More to the point of the present age, Roger Ascham used to say, "We preachers ought to think like great men, but speak like common people." The history of the pulpit in all ages would furnish us with admirable and useful anecdotes and illustrations of the way in which this Divine simplicity has become an immense power for usefulness. As Cowper says,

"I seek Divine simplicity in him
Who handles things Divine."

A well-known minister, now in London, when in Inverness, had invited another preacher to occupy his pulpit ; and a stranger had inquired how the strange minister had been liked the preceding Sunday at the Kirk ; and the reply was, "Weel, he carries a braw rod and a bonny lang line, but eh ! mon, there is neither hook nor bait at the end of it !" Useful preaching has a hooking power. "That is a good sermon," says Matthew Henry, "which does thee good." When we speak of the tongues of fire it is well to remember that the most extensive influence for usefulness has not always emanated from sermons either most elaborately prepared, or most in harmony with the highest classical and rhetorical rules of composition. Some of the most useful, it is said, have sinned against every precept of the schools. Scottish church history makes mention of a sermon preached by John Livingstone, of the Kirk of Shotts, which proved effective to the

conversion of five hundred persons ; but not a word of the sermon was ever written, and, from what we know of the excellent preacher, it was very likely exceedingly rude and homely. But it did its work. We have often been reminded of a singular illustration employed by a very useful Primitive Methodist minister in conversation with the highly accomplished and finished orator Dr. Robert McAll. McAll was deplored to his ruder brother that, with all his fame and popularity, he could not congratulate himself on being eminently useful, while, on the other hand, his Primitive Methodist friend was really renowned for solid and abiding usefulness, and the Methodist said, " You see, Doctor, the difference between us is something like this. You are a great lapidary, and wonderful at polishing and carving stones. And you go down to the seaside, and you pick up a likely stone, one that you think very beautiful, and you bring it up into your study, and polish it, and round it, and finish it off, and then you take it and throw it among the crowd. Well, at the best, supposing it to hit, it only hits one person, but, perhaps, by the vehemency and force with which you throw it, it goes far away, beyond the crowd altogether. Now, that's not my way. I am no lapidary. I cannot polish stones, but I go down to the seaside, just where you went, and fill my pockets with stones, and I come back and throw them in good handfuls among the crowd, and they are pretty sure to hit some." As we said just now, useful preaching has not only a hooking, it has a hitting power.

To turn to quite another line and order of thought, we see quite different estimates are formed

of what constitutes the tongue of fire. For a long time it was supposed to consist in rich and rounded language, a pomp of words and diction set in a studied pomp of delivery. We believe eloquence in our times has passed into quite another method. We have no doubt our readers are perfectly familiar with the very charming essay of David Hume "On the Eloquence of the Ancients." Cold sceptic as he was, he appears to have admitted the fervid glow of the words of Demosthenes and Cicero; he refers, as an illustration, to the language of Cicero on the tragic crucifixion of a Roman citizen, in which the impassioned orator lifts up his voice to the most desolate solitude of rocks and mountains, and expects to see those rude and inanimate parts of nature moved with horror and indignation at the recital of so enormous an action. "With what a *blaze* of eloquence," says Hume, "must such a sentence be surrounded to give it grace or to cause any impression on the hearers!" Cold sceptic as he was, Hume evidently admires this, this rush of feeling, this torrent, this cataract of words, mirroring, as it rushed along, tropes and images with a corresponding action exhibiting the extraordinary inflammatory passions boiling beneath, or seeming to do so.

The age of "*blazing* eloquence"—we quote Mr. Hume's words—has passed. Prosopopœia, personification, and apostrophe affect us no more; if it were that ancient preachers believed too much in starch and frills, we think it must be admitted that most of us moderns are far too slovenly. We believe with Hume that we could not now endure such poetical figures as Cicero employs or such

language as Demosthenes', as when he breaks out, "No! my fellow-citizens. No, you have not erred. I swear by the spirits of those heroes who fought for the same cause on the plains of Marathon and Platea." In fact, of such eloquence we could almost believe and hope we have seen the last; we fancy Cicero would often be intolerable, and Demosthenes would be sustained chiefly by his rough—may we not say his coarse?—invective. Could we bear to hear that apostrophe even of Whitefield, which Hume himself records, and which surely was in the spirit of the eloquence of the ancients, when, in impassioned grandeur, conceiving the angel to be present, but departing, he exclaimed, "Stop, Gabriel, and bear to heaven the tidings," etc.? Not often, we think, would Mr. Spurgeon indulge in such passages as that in which he imagines the Judge of all to be closing the tragedy of time—"Gabriel, is the last elect soul safe in and home?" "Yes, Lord." "Then close the great gates, and throw the keys into the abyss of the pit." It is only in certain states of society and of feeling that such rapt utterances can be indulged. We have relegated to poetry such bold imagery, and we know few things of the order finer than James Montgomery's lines on the Crucifixion; once their spirit and accent might have been tolerated in oratory; they find their vehicle in verse, and, divested of their verse form, they may even be given as a fine illustration of that of which Hume speaks as "blazing eloquence," apostrophe and personification in a passion of indignation:—

"I asked the heavens, 'What foe to God hath done
This unexampled deed?' The heavens exclaim,

“ ‘Twas man ; and we in horror snatched the sun
From such a spectacle of guilt and shame.’
I asked the sea. The sea in fury boiled,
And answered with his voice of storms, ‘ ‘Twas man ;
My waves in panic at his crime recoiled,
Disclosed the abyss, and from the centre ran.’
I asked the earth. The earth replied aghast,
‘ ‘Twas man ; and such strange pangs my bosom rent
That still I groan and shudder at the past.’
To man, gay, smiling, thoughtless man, I went,
And asked him next. *He* turned a scornful eye,
Shook his proud head, and deigned me no reply.”

The tongue of fire on the throne of eloquence has, however, manifested itself in marvellously various ways, and the memory of apostrophe in the pulpit not unnaturally recalls the instance of one of the most remarkable of preachers, the most celebrated, we suppose, of all Portuguese divines, who has been called by his countrymen the last of the mediæval preachers—Antonio Vieyra. It is to be lamented that we know so little of him and have so few illustrations of his really great and burning discourses ; and for the little that we know of him, we are indebted to Dr. J. M. Neale. He was born in 1608, and died in 1697. As a preacher, as a diplomatist, and a great and successful missionary, he was one of the most remarkable characters Europe has ever known. He had a mighty acquaintance with Scripture ; the illustration we present shows a terrible power of irony ; but he had a searching knowledge of the human heart which has led some to compare him with Massillon. The following strange *Sermon to the Fishes*, while it has the wit and humour of Quevedo or Cervantes, shines and cuts

like a keen Damascus blade ; but it does not give a full idea of the holy purity of the man ; it was preached at Maranhão, on the coast of South America, which was said to be the most scandalously demoralized place of any inhabited by Christians on the face of the earth ; and it certainly is an illustration of scathing and searching severity, with which, indeed, many of his sermons abounded, although they exhibit nothing of the coarse buffoon or the low droll. Indeed, whatever readers may think of the extracts we give from the following sermon, majesty and grandeur were the attributes of the preacher. The text was, “*Ye are the salt of the earth.*”

SERMON TO THE FISHES.

“ What ! and are we to preach to-day to the fishes ? No audience can be worse. At least fishes have two good qualities as hearers : they *can* hear, and they *cannot* speak. One thing only might discourage the preacher : that *fishes are a kind of race who cannot be converted.* But this circumstance is here so very ordinary that from custom one feels it no longer. For this cause, I shall not speak to-day of heaven or of hell ; and thus this sermon will be less gloomy than mine are usually considered, from putting men continually in remembrance of these two ends.

* * * * *

“ *To begin, then, with your praises, fishes and brethren.* I might very well tell you that, of all living and sensitive creatures, you were the first which GOD created. He made you before the fowls of the air ; He made you before the beasts of the earth ; He made you before man himself. GOD gave to man the monarchy and dominion over all the animals of the three elements, and in the charter in which He honoured him with these powers, fishes are the first

named. *Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle.* Among all animals, fishes are the most numerous and the largest. . . . For this reason, Moses, the chronicler of the creation, while he does not mention the name of other animals, names a fish only. *God created great whales.* And the three musicians of the furnace of Babylon brought forward in their song the name of the same fish, with especial honour: *O ye whales, . . . bless ye the Lord.* These and other praises, then, and other excellences of your creation and greatness, I might well, O fishes, set before you; but *such a matter is only fit for an audience of men who permit themselves to be carried away by these vanities, and is also only suited to those places where adulation is allowed, and not in the pulpit.*

“ . . . Great praise do ye merit, O fishes, for the respect and devotion which ye have had to the preacher of the word of God, and so much the more because ye did not exhibit it once only. *Jonah* went as a preacher of the same God, and was on board a ship when that great tempest arose. *How did men then treat him, and how did fishes treat him?* Men cast him into the sea, to be eaten by fishes; and the fish which followed him carried him to the shores of Nineveh, that he might there preach, and save those men. *Is it possible that fishes should assist in the salvation of men, and that men should cast into the sea the ministers of salvation?* Behold, fishes, and avoid vainglory—how much better are ye than men ! ”

Passing over his next division, in which he says, “Fishes, by how much farther you are from man by so much the better ! ” and his droll illustration of the flood, “when of the fishes not only all escaped, but were much more at liberty than before, because the land and sea were all sea ! ” and some other favour-

able aspects presented to him by fish, he proceeds to the items of blame.

“The first thing which does not edify me in you, fishes, is that you eat one another, a great scandal in itself, but the circumstances make it worse: you not only eat one another, but the great eat the little; if the contrary were the case, the evil would be less; if the little ate the great, one would suffice for many, but as the great eat the little, a hundred, nay, a thousand, do not suffice for one. I preach to you, fishes, to show how abominable is the custom. Look, fishes, from the sea to the land! No, no, it is not that way I mean; you are turning your eyes to the forests; here! here! It is to the city you must look! Do you think that it is only the Indians who eat each other? White men eat each other far more! Is any one of them dead, they all fall upon the miserable man; his heirs devour him; his legatees devour him; his executors devour him; his creditors devour him; the commissioners devour him; the physician, who helped to kill him, devours him; he is devoured by the grave-digger, by the bell-ringer, by the priest. The poor man is not yet swallowed up by the earth, but he is already swallowed up by its inhabitants.”

In closing this chapter, we may be reminded that the voice of the pulpit and its tongue of fire have sometimes found a free course even in the very face of the flames which were about to consume the body of the preacher. When Jean de Caturce was brought forth to be burned in Toulouse, a pulpit was set up, and a friar stepped into it, appointed by his church to preach in denunciation of the heresies for which the martyr was about to suffer. In a voice which was heard all over the square, the friar announced his text: “The Spirit speaketh

expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." The monks were delighted with so appropriate a text, until the clear voice of the martyr Caturce thundered out, "You have read only a fragment; read on, and tell us what these doctrines of devils are." The friar was confounded. "Read on," cried Caturce, and the friar read on: "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created, and which are to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe." The friar was not equal to the occasion, and, strange as it seems, while the discomfited preacher was unable to pursue the sermon he came to deliver, the martyr took up the text, and preached from it in the very presence of the magistrates and other so-called officers of justice a sermon which arrested the attention of all the hearers, although it did not save him, for he was burned immediately afterwards.

Not easy nor pleasant preaching this, but it is an illustration of that strong faith which makes words effective and memorable when they fall from the lips of men. We must not attempt to group together the instances of bold and fervent spirits who have fearlessly turned their stake or scaffold into a pulpit or a whispering gallery, whence they have sent forth their convictions; only the principle of convincing speech has been the same, *i.e.*, "We also believe and therefore speak"; this has tipped the tongue with sacred fire, and has been the point of contact between the soul of the preacher and the audience, causing them to say, "Did not our hearts burn within us?"

One memorable instance we may cite from the history of our own country. It was at that moment when the Bible, set free from Rome to be read by the common people, seemed to need the strong and terrible light of the stake for men to read it by. The traveller in England knows Oxford well, England's most graceful city. The reader has, perhaps, walked down its queenly High Street, its colleges and halls black and hoar with the winters of ten centuries. He has, perhaps, turned into St. Mary's Street, and has immediately come upon a delicate Gothic monument. Then he certainly paused there ; the very dust of that spot is venerable and sacred. Three hundred and thirty years since, on a cold rainy November morning, in the jail, two hallowed and venerable men were called up by the sheriff to die, to be burned to death, two bishops, fathers and founders of the English Church. We can see them then come forth, men with long flowing white beards, one eighty, the other nearly seventy, in their long white woollen shrouds ; they step along between the sheriffs to that place where now stands that Gothic monument. There are the two stakes ; they step up to them. Always as we have stood there we have thought we could hear the click, click, click, as the executioner drove in the nails to the staples which fastened the chain round their sacred bodies ; then the faggots were piled around them ; then, before the last act of the tragedy, there must be a sermon to the two great culprits ; and a friar, one Dr. Smith, was appointed to preach, and he took an odd text—"Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am

nothing." But the real throne of eloquence was not the friar's pulpit, but the stake of the martyrs. Then the igniting brand, and then the fangs of flame passing to and fro ; but, as the smoke rose thick around them, it was the most ancient and venerable of the fathers, it was Latimer, who raised himself, and turning to his brother bishop over the sash chain which bound him, said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Only a little while, and then he and his brother martyr fell over the chain into the flame ; soon at once stake and bodies were consumed ; their ashes were borne on the wind or trampled in the street, while amazed yeomen and burgesses walked their way through the streets, wondering if God were dead or deaf ; but were not the words prophetic ? When such tongues of fire speak,—

"They leave behind
Powers that will work for them,—air, earth, and skies.
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget them. They have great allies ;
Their friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

CHAPTER III.

ST. BERNARD: THE MEDIÆVAL TONGUE OF FIRE.

ST. BERNARD is neither by name, character, nor influence unknown to our readers. His name is a very prominent one in the church history of mediæval times—of his age he is the very foremost man. He also may be designated as “the solitary monk that shook the world.” The form of the frail man rises—amidst the encircling crowd of emperors and kings and popes, princes and priests, fighting barons and crusaders, the archdisputants and polemical heretics of the time—with commanding and most subduing power: he influenced all, he ruled all. The lone hermit touched and impressed himself upon all the affairs of his time, always with a powerful, often with a painful distinctness. He moves like the very Elijah of Europe through the nations of those times, now pitching his voice to the shrill fervour or the ensanguined furiousness of a mad apostle, as when he became the prophet of the Crusades, now sinking it to the deep and tender minor tone of Christian experiences, when, amidst his band of monks, he breathes out his contemplative sermons on *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's*. From beneath the clostral

shades of Clairvaux he moulded princes to his will. His was the voice which determined a distracted people and church in their election of a pope. The spiritual vivacity of the man, in an age when nations received the law from the spiritual kingdom, was surpassingly amazing. That lonely man might have said, as a far different chieftain said :—

“ Of old things all are over-old ;
Of good things none are good enough.
We'll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.

“ I, too, will have my kings, that take
From me the sign of life and death ;
Kingdoms shall shift about like clouds,
Obedient to my breath.”

He was a Burgundian. His father was a feudal baron, lord of the castle of Fontaines, near Dijon, by name Tesselin. When he became the successful abbot of European fame, and cloisters rose in England in connection with his order, one of the most glorious and graceful in Europe sprang to his honour, as well as to the honour of the Lord ; and the ruins of our Fontaines Abbey perpetuate the memory of the birthplace of the great Middle Age monk and preacher. Tesselin was, in his way, a pious fighting-man, surnamed *Sorus*, which meant red-headed, a kind of Christian Rufus, with a rude sense of justice and ill-conditioned holiness in him. He is described as gentle, although brave ; modest, although strong ; and pious, although rich. And so also the mother of our saint was an earnest, loving, devout creature, Alice, or Alith, by name ; a pale, shadowy, mournful mother, the latter years of her

life passed in austerities and devotions ; charitable after the fashion of the times, mother of seven children—six sons and one daughter—such a mother of such a son would, of course, not be without monkish eulogists ; and she has ever had plenty who have covered her name and tomb with all legendary and traditional honour. The Abbé of Dijon requested her body for the church of the blessed martyr Benignus. There she was buried. She was wont to appear, we are told, after death to her son Bernard, advising him to continue in his good work when he avowed himself to monkery, in which tradition we are to see no more than “the robe of beauty given to the tomb unseen in the sunlight,” and to hear only “the words of the departed,” which, as Mr. Morison, St. Bernard’s latest and best English biographer, says, “acquire a strange reverberating echo from the vaults wherein they sleep.”

Bernard was the child of these two good people, his mind and heart not less than his body ; he studied at Chatillon. They were stirring times, the times of his early boyhood ; they were the days of the first Crusade ; there was a blaze of wild enthusiasm for the liberation of the Holy Land and sepulchre from the hands of the infidels ; this wild idea was “the way of God,” and all men were embarking upon the great pilgrimage of nations. Lands were sold for the love of Christ ; barons and serfs all felt the animation of a common tendency and hope. “Christ,” says one old writer, “had thundered through the minds of all.” Some of the poor harnessed their oxen to

their farm-carts, and placed therein their goods and their little ones, and started in all simplicity for the Holy City. Along the bad roads and the long journey, even from province to province, they went, slowly moving and creaking over marsh and moor. As town or castle rose in sight, the children would ask, "Is that the Jerusalem we are going to?" One of the chief leaders was the Duke of Burgundy. He never returned alive ; and he desired that his remains might rest among the poor monks of the wretched Abbey of Citeaux, rather than in any of the more sumptuous and wealthy abbeys of his dominions. Citeaux was near to the hearth of Fontaines, and the Duke was the suzerain of Tesselin. The good Alith would print the lesson of this event upon the mind of the little Bernard, then nine years old—the great Crusader going forth with his warriors in full panoply, and returning coffined and still to the cemetery at Citeaux.

It was a strange age. Two instincts ruled the world : an instinct for fighting and an instinct for praying. Men passed from one action to the other with ease and happiness ; nay, at last did not pass from one to the other, but fought and prayed in the same breath. Thus rose the Society of the Templars ; hence the stream of the mad Crusaders ; for ordinary fighters, the usual occupation was besieging a castle ; everybody was slaying or being slain. A very fierce world ; and thoughtful and refined natures had very little hesitation in quitting it. Dukes and princes, peasants and paupers, all sought the haven in which they desired to say their prayers, and lie down for the long night in peace.

“ And such a haven was then opened, and inviting to all. Between the clash of arms and the din of wars comes a silvery peal of convent bells. In the deep, hushed winter’s night, the chorus-song of matins is heard in measured cadence, and the last chant of compline goes forth as the summer sun approaches the horizon. There, in the thick woods, sleeps the monastery, from whence these voices and bell-tones are heard. Calm and holy it looks, casting long rays of light into the dark air, as the ‘lated traveller’ hastens to its welcome shelter. For a young ardent spirit, entering the world, the choice practically was between a life of strife, violence, wickedness, of ignoble or ferocious joys and sorrow, or of sober, self-denying labour and solitude, with a solemn strain in the heart, lightening and prospering the work of the hands.” *

At first Bernard heard, of course, the voices of the trumpets and the clang and clash of arms, but he was too frail for a knight. Then, in the time of the extraordinary literary awakening of the twelfth century, philosophy lifted up her voice and called him. The great doctor of Paris, William of Champeaux, is celebrated throughout Europe; and, still more remarkable, the young audacious knight-errant of heresy, Master Peter Abelard, was fascinating crowds of thousands, over mountains and seas, to enjoy the privilege of hearing him lecture. And the spell of intellect almost called Bernard aside from the life of holiness and prayer to which his mother’s example and conversation had incited him. Then, in a dubious but all distracted mood, he rode

* “ The Life and Times of St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, A.D. 1091—1153. By James Cotter Morison, M.A., Lincoln College, Oxford.

on his way through the tangled forest and the bare bleak moor, and presently he came to a church ; the clouds of doubt rolled away before the rising sun of faith, and upon his knees, in that wayside church, and in a torrent of tears, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and poured forth his heart like water in the presence of the Lord. That was the hour of his conversion ; from that hour his determination to enter the monastic life never faltered.

But Bernard would not enter the monastery alone. The instinct was strong within him which leads us to desire the conversion of other souls immediately after the conversion of our own ; and he at once displayed that commanding personal ascendancy, that overpowering influence of spirit, which hardly met with a defeat during his long life. His uncle, his brothers, Guido and Gerard, both knights, yielded very shortly to the spell of his power. Nay, the effect of his preaching was such that mothers hid their sons, and wives their husbands, and companions their friends, lest they should be led captive by the persuasive eloquence of the youthful enthusiast. At last he had gathered round him thirty adherents ; with them he retired into seclusion at Chatillon, where for the space of six months they all devoted themselves by preparation for the great change they were to undergo. In the year 1113, Bernard, being then twenty-two years old, knocked at the gate, and disappeared within the walls of Citeaux. It was a severe house, of all religious houses one of the most severe. It was under the rule of Stephen Harding, an Englishman, from Sherborne, in Dorsetshire. Within its walls he was

carrying on a system of monastic reform, keeping St. Benedict's rule most literally, not conventionally and with large allowances, as was usual in the strictest houses. No, but eating only one meal a day ; and they had risen twelve hours from their couches, sung psalms, and worked in the fields, before they got even that, never tasting fish, meat, grease, or eggs, and milk only rarely, their dress consisting only of three garments, all of the coarsest wool, their church austere in its simplicity. There was little sympathy with this pleasant monastic life, and a fearful epidemic raging through the cloisters seemed likely to bring the dream of monastic reform to a close, when Bernard and his brethren sought admittance beneath its cheerless shades.

But these austerities, and others we must not stay to particularize, were too few for Bernard, and he determined to do his best, not only to subdue the desires of the flesh which arise through the senses, but even those senses themselves. He excluded himself from all communication with the outer world ; time given to sleep he regarded as lost ; when importunate friends came to converse with him he heard nothing, he stopped his ears with little wads of flax, and buried his head deep in the cowl ; for food he lost all desire, and the little he took seemed taken rather to defer death than to sustain life ; he betook himself also to hard manual labour—digging, hewing wood, and carrying it on his shoulders. One luxury for a time remained, the desire for it unextinguished as yet, but to be also banished from the soul by-and-by ; it was the love of nature. He lived in this love ; to him, in

his first monastic days, the love of God and the love of nature were all ; from nature to the Bible, from the Bible to nature ; the beeches and the oaks, the woods and fields, and the Scriptures—no world of thought came between him and that glorious phantasmagoria, the result of a word of God, and at a word of God, at last, to vanish away ; only a procession of burning thoughts swept through the soul, raptures of ecstatic love, in the gloomy forest, and before the sailing clouds, and the pomp of setting suns. No world of causes, and effects, and laws obscured or aided his vision. He says to a friend and pupil,—

“Trust to one who has had experience. You will find something far greater in the woods than you will in books. Stones and trees will teach you that which you will never learn from masters. Think you not you can suck honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty rock ? Do not the mountains drop sweetness, the hills run with milk and honey, and the valleys stand thick with corn ?”

We have spoken of the surprise created by the selection of Citeaux as the solitude to which Bernard consigned himself, with his thirty companions. Great, however, must have been the joy created by their arrival in that decaying monastery. It was the turning-point in its history. Very soon it became necessary to leave the spot of his selection ; and, selected by the Abbot of Citeaux, he became himself, although only just turned four-and-twenty, the head of a new community. Stephen Harding placed a cross in Bernard’s hands, gave him twelve monks, and sent the young Abbot forth to choose

some spot for a new religious house in the wilderness. He and his companions struck away northward, passed up by the source of the Seine, by Chatillon, a place of old schoolday associations, till he reached a place called Ferté, equally distant between Troyes and Chaumont, situated on the river Aube. Four miles beyond La Ferté, they came to a deep valley, thick, umbrageous forests giving a character of gloom and wildness. It was called the Valley of Wormwood, a name surely befitting the austerities we have associated with our pilgrims. Here he laid the foundation of that building whose name is immortal in the history of the Church and of Europe—the famous Abbey of Clairvaux. It was a singularly unpretentious building, utterly excluding from the mind all romantic associations with monastic piles,—a building covered by a single roof, under which chapel, dormitory, and refectory were all included, miserable windows, artistically contrived rather to exclude, than to convey the light. The monks' beds are described as a kind of bin of wooden planks, long and wide enough for a man to lie down in; a small space hewn out with an axe allowed room for the sleeper to get in or out, and the inside was pleasantly strewn with chaff or dried leaves; these below, and the woodwork above, are the mattress and the bed-clothes which furnish to our imagination an idea of the comforts of the home.

In truth, all about the establishment marked its extreme poverty. They were near to September when the rude building was completed. Autumn and winter were approaching. They had no stores

laid in. Their food during the summer had been a compound of leaves and coarse grain ; their food during the winter was to be beechnuts and roots. The austerities of Citeaux, before Bernard made his appearance, had been severe ; but those austerities, which to him were the necessary conditions of his spiritual life, began to be terrible to his twelve monks. Very shortly there seem to have been signs of mutiny. Deaf to their Abbot's entreaties, they talked of leaving the valley of bitterness and returning to Citeaux. At this period monkish historians tax the faith of readers with the traditions of miracles, now commencing to perform a part in the history of Bernard, and henceforth never wanting to that history. "Wait and ye shall see, O ye of little faith," said the Abbot ; and it seems they did see ; if not miracles, marvels made their appearance. But when are marvels wanting in the life of faith ? He compelled the obedience, and, eventually, the perfectly docile trust of his more faithless brethren, and finally presented himself before his diocesan for consecration over the, as yet, quite incipient abbacy. A precious appearance he and his are described as presenting in the palace of the renowned dialectician, William of Champeaux. Before the experienced master of the Paris schools came the threadbare, care-worn youth, with attenuated body and emaciated countenance. That was a day in which splendour was not wanting to the bishop's palace ; and we can easily figure the mirth of the loungers and idlers as the grotesque band made its appearance.

But the old master soon detected the soul in the

ragged body, and a life-long friendship was formed between the two from that hour, which, in the life of Bernard, presents us with many pleasant glimpses and particulars. And now Bernard fell ill, which also is not surprising. William of Champeaux, when he found his new friend resolute against the relaxation of the painful austerities of his life, started for Citeaux, bishop as he was, that from Stephen Harding, the Abbot, he might receive the power to compel the remittance of those toils and pains beneath which the enfeebled constitution was failing fast. He received a commission to manage Bernard for twelve months himself. Hastening back to Clairvaux, he found its Abbot now obedient and yielding. He caused a small cottage to be built outside the monastery walls, and commanded that his diet should no longer be regulated by monastic rule. All this was irksome enough to the spirit of Bernard ; but it is easy to see, that probably but for this timely interference, that magic influence, which gave to Clairvaux a far more than European fame, and moved popes, emperors, and princes at its touch, had never been known. He, on his part, seems to have received his lease of life and comfort very ungraciously ; and, when William of St. Thierry visited him in his hut, and asked him how he did, a satire, not very common with him in those days, broke forth, as he replied, "Excellent well. I, who have hitherto ruled over rational beings, by a great judgment of God, am given over to obey an irrational beast."

Clairvaux, meantime, began to rear its loftier buildings. William of St. Thierry breaks forth into

rapturous exclamations at once over the beauty of the valley and the consecrated labours which were there discovering themselves ; a still, silent solitude, yet the valley soon became full of men. The sounds of labour, the chants of the brethren, and choral services began now to relieve the solitudes of the forests and the gorges. We have also the story of Peter de Roya, who turned aside into the valley from a long habituation, as he tells us, "with festive banquets, and silver salvers." "To him it seemed," as he says, "that he had found the building whose foundation is in the holy mountains—the gates loved of the Lord more than the dwellings of Jacob. In Clairvaux," says he, "they have found Jacob's ladder, with angels upon it, some descending, who so provide for their bodies, that they faint not on the way: and others ascending, who so rule their souls, that their bodies hereafter may be glorified with them." He continues: "To judge from their outward appearance, their tools, their disordered clothes, they appear a race of fools, without speech or sense; but a true thought in my mind tells me that their life is hid with Christ in the heavens. Many of them, I hear, are bishops and earls, and men illustrious through their birth and knowledge. I see Godfrey of Peronne, Raynald of Picardy, William of St. Omer, Walter of Lisle; all of whom I knew formerly in the old man, whereof I see now no trace, by God's favour." All this ended in his going to Clairvaux.

From his retirement of sickness Bernard came forth, we think, healthier in mind as well as in body. His nature seems to have righted itself, as

far as it ever righted itself in its earthly tabernacle ; and, in the course of a year or two, he commenced that course of marvellous literary labours, infinite correspondences, sermons, extending governments, and travels, which alternate his name in our minds, as the man of action not less than the man of contemplation. Not that he ever became tolerant or tender to any kinds of self-indulgence ; and his description of a wolf of a prior, whose tender regards to the necessities of human flesh had succeeded in fascinating one of his monks from Clairvaux to Cluny, is sufficiently humorous : hear him : "Wine and the like, soup and fat things, these are for the body, not for the mind ; not for the soul, but the flesh is nourished by ragouts. Many brethren in Egypt serve God a long time without eating fish, pepper, ginger, sage, and cummin ; they indeed delight the palate ; but think you youth can be passed in safety surrounded by them ?" He bids those who fear his fasts, and vigils, and manual labours, to dwell on the thought of eternal flames. "The thought of outer darkness will banish all fear of solitude. If you reflect that account is to be kept of every idle word, silence will strike you as less appalling ; and eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth will make a feather-bed and mattress equally indifferent. Arise, then, soldier of Christ." But the soldier did not arise : the morning slumbers, and the ginger and the pepper were too much for the beech-nuts of Clairvaux.

At this period of the history of Bernard we might dwell a little time, did space permit, upon

the miracles which form a portion of his life ; but we cannot dwell. It may be sufficient to remark that it was an age in which material nature was supposed to be at the command of moral goodness. Must not the earthly give way to the heavenly ? Must not Christ be the conqueror of Satan ? One writer tells us how he saw a knight offer thanks to Bernard for having cured him with a piece of consecrated bread. There are plenty of stories of the diseases which fled at the command or the blessing of Bernard. When he came to the dedication of the church of Foigny, it happened that an incredible number of flies filled the place. "I excommunicate them," said the saint. Next morning they were all found dead, they covered the pavement, they were shovelled out with spades, the church was rid of them ; the cursing of the Foigny flies passed into a proverb. Shall we laugh at these things ? Shall we laugh at the story that, when his attendants were unable to catch his horse, Bernard said, "Let us pray ;" and, kneeling down, they were not through the Lord's prayer when the horse returned and stood before Bernard ? We give these stories in their crudity. At any rate, they are significant enough, and show the estimation in which Bernard was held by his cotemporaries. And we must remember, in looking at the matter, that our talk about miracles would have availed nothing with Bernard. "Laws of nature !" we think we hear him exclaim ; "what do I know of the laws of nature ? Miracle is the law of God." Miracles, and apparitions, and Divine and demoniac interferences with human affairs !

a man of the twelfth century—and especially such a man as Bernard—would have as soon parted with his existence as he would have parted with his belief in these. Moreover, there was evidently that in the psychological character of Bernard which would easily hang round him the apparition of miracles to ordinary minds: his whole life was a kind of miracle, resolvable by us in a measure; and, if our readers are disposed still to smile, we must remind them that miracles belong to that time as much as the feudal castle, vast monastic piles, and the baron's chain mail.

At the age of thirty-four Bernard travelled to fortify the population of his young community.

He visited Paris, "a little, thronged, dirty, ill-paved city :" one smiles at the unrecognisable description. The schools of Paris were the marvel of Europe. Bernard was requested to enter them, and lecture in them. He did not enter the schools, but he was glad enough to seize the opportunity for dilating on the true philosophy,—contempt for the world and voluntary poverty for Christ's sake. His visit, while not entirely unsuccessful, does not seem to have greatly strengthened Clairvaux. He gladly returned to his peaceful seclusion, from which, indeed, he was never a willing wanderer; and there are many passages of his life which give us glimpses of serene and thoughtful days, amidst the turmoil and barbarism of that wild, ungovernable time. In his way, we are pleased also to see that St. Bernard set himself heartily to the reformation of burglarious barons, bishops who thought too much of their temporalities, and abbots who gave more attention to their revenues

than to souls. He set himself, as the representative of the Church, to do battle with the exuberant animalism of the age—to tame it and drill it ; and it is truly amusing, in this connection, to notice how, again and again, the question of cookery forces itself upon our saint's attention. Some passages, in which he condemns the luxury of the Cluniacs, are scarcely less curious than they are humorous. A Cluniac dinner must have been a tolerably inviting repast. "Who," says our saint, "could say, to speak of nothing else, in how many forms eggs are cooked and worked up ? with what care they are turned in and out, made hard or soft, or chopped fine ; now fried, now roasted, now stuffed : now they are served mixed with other things, now by themselves : even the external appearance of the dishes is such that the eye, as well as the taste, is charmed ; and when even the stomach complains that it is full, curiosity is still alive. So also," he continues, "what shall I say about water-drinking, when even wine-and-water is despised ? We all of us, it appears, directly we become monks are afflicted with weak stomachs, and the important advice of the apostle to use wine, we, in a praiseworthy manner, endeavour to follow, but for some unexplained reason, the condition of *a little* is usually omitted." In the same manner he denounces the monkish lust of dress. " You say religion is in the heart ; true, but when you are about to buy a cowl you rush over to the towns, visit the markets, examine the fairs, dive into the houses of the merchants, turn over all their goods, undo their bundles of cloth, feel it with your fingers, hold it to your eyes or to the rays of the sun, and if

anything coarse or faded appears you reject it ; but if you are pleased with any object of unusual beauty or brightness, you buy it, whatever the price. Does this come from your heart, or your simplicity ? I wonder that our abbots allow these things, unless it arise from the fact, that no one is apt to blame any error with confidence, if he cannot trust to his own freedom from the same." Nor these vices alone. He speaks of others whose vice was a mock humility : " Again, with our bellies full of beans, and our minds of pride, we condemn those who are full of meat ; as if it were not better to eat a little fat on occasion, than to be gorged, even to belching, with windy vegetables." He looked with little more favour upon the rich architecture, now beginning to adorn the churches of Europe, than the sumptuary condition of the priests. " The church's walls are resplendent," exclaims he, " but the poor are not there."

" In the churches are suspended, not *coronæ*, but wheels studded with gems, and surrounded by lights, which are scarcely brighter than the precious stones which are near them. Instead of candlesticks, we behold great trees of brass, fashioned with wonderful skill, and glittering as much through their jewels as through their own lights. What do you suppose is the object of all this ? The repentance of the contrite, or the admiration of the gazers ? O vanity of vanities ! But not more vain than foolish. The church's walls are resplendent, but the poor are not there. . . . The curious find wherewith to amuse themselves—the wretched find no stay for them in their misery. Why, at least, do we not revenge the images of the saints, with which the very pavement we walk on is covered ? Often an angel's mouth is spit into, and the face of some saint

trodden on by the passers-by. . . . But if we cannot do without the images, why can we not spare the brilliant colours? What has all this to do with monks, with professors of poverty, with men of spiritual minds?

“ Again, in the cloisters, what is the meaning of those ridiculous monsters, of that deformed beauty, that beautiful deformity, before the very eyes of the brethren when reading? What are disgusting monkeys there for, or ferocious lions, or horrible centaurs, or spotted tigers, or fighting soldiers, or huntsmen sounding the bugle? You may see there one head with many bodies, or one body with numerous heads. Here is a quadruped with a serpent’s tail; there is a fish with a beast’s head; there a creature, in front a horse, behind a goat; another has horns at one end, and a horse’s tail at the other. In fact, such an endless variety of forms appear everywhere, that it is more pleasant to read in the stonework than in books, and to spend the day in admiring these oddities than in meditating on the law of God. Good God! if we are not ashamed of these absurdities, why do we not grieve at the cost of them? ”

Thus, finally, perhaps, Bernard would not be far from a disposition to pronounce the objurgation of Thomas Carlyle, “ Let the devil fly away with fine arts.” “ I never met with a man,” says Ruskin, “ whose mind was fully set upon the world to come, perfect and right before God, who cared about art at all.” We are disposed to commend the consideration of these sundry texts from all these worthies to those who find a strong disposition to sneer at Puritanic tabernacles and conventicles, on the one hand; or who are disposed to estimate the worth of our modern Nonconformity by its æsthetic developments, on the other.

As Bernard verged towards his fortieth year, the

period of his comparative retirement and rest drew to a close. He attended the Council of Troyes—that celebrated council, famous for the part it took in founding the order of the Knights Templars. In this order those two grand instincts of mediæval times to which we have already referred—the fighting instinct and the praying instinct—became distinctly one. Bernard's exhortation to the Knights of the Temple is very characteristic of the times and of himself, although issued some three or four years later. He contrasts the secular with the monastic warfare in the following extraordinary words, curiously remarkable for their saintly blood-thirstiness.

“ You always run a risk, you worldly soldier, of either killing your adversary's body, and your own soul in consequence, or of being killed yourself both body and soul. If, while wishing to kill another you are killed yourself, you die a homicide. If you vanquish and kill your enemy, you live a homicide. But what an astounding error, what madness is it, O Knights, to fight at such cost and trouble for no wages except those of death or sin! You deck out your horses with silken trappings ; you wear flaunting cloaks over your steel breastplates ; you paint your shields, your spears, and your saddles ; your spurs and bridles shine with gold, and silver, and gems ; and in this gay pomp, with an amazing and incredible madness, you rush upon death. Have you not found from experience that these things are especially needed by a soldier, viz., that he be bold yet vigilant as regards his own safety, quick in his movements, and prompt to strike? You, on the contrary, cultivate long hair, which gets in your eyes ; your feet are entangled in the folds of your flowing robes ; your delicate hands are buried in your ample and spreading sleeves. In addition to all

this, your reasons for fighting are light and frivolous, viz., the impulses of an irrational anger, or a desire of vain glory, or the wish to obtain some earthly possession. Certainly, for such causes as these it is not safe either to slay or to be slain.

“ But Christ’s soldiers can fight in safety the battles of their Lord ; fearing no sin from killing an enemy ; dreading no danger from their own death. Seeing that for Christ’s sake death must be suffered or inflicted, it brings with it no sin, but rather earns much glory. In the one case Christ is benefited, in the other Christ is gained,—Christ, who willingly accepts an enemy’s death for revenge, and more willingly still grants Himself to the soldier for consolation. Christ’s soldier can securely kill—can more securely die : when he dies, it profits him ; when he slays it profits Christ. Not without just cause is he girded with a sword. When he kills a malefactor, he is not a slayer of men, but a slayer of evil, and plainly an avenger of Christ against those who do amiss. But, when he is killed, he has not perished, he has reached his goal. The Christian exults in the death of a pagan because Christ is glorified. In the death of the Christian the King’s bountifulness is shown when the soldier is led forth to his reward. The just will rejoice over the first when he sees the punishment of the wicked. Of the latter men will say, ‘ *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth.* ’ ”

The following remarkable words, pervaded surely by a droll grim humour, express his feelings at the departure of the troops of crusaders for the Holy Land :—

“ But the most joyful and salutary result to be perceived is, that in such a multitude of men who flock to the East there are few besides scoundrels, vagabonds, thieves, murderers, perjurors, and adulterers, from whose emigration a

double good is observed to flow, the cause of a twofold joy. Indeed they give as much delight to those whom they leave as to those whom they go to assist. Both rejoice,—those whom they defend and those whom they no longer oppress. Egypt is glad at their departure; yet Mount Zion and the daughters of Judah shall be joyful over the succour they will bring; the one for losing its most cruel spoilers, the other at receiving its most faithful defenders."

The most distinct turning point in the career of St. Bernard was, perhaps, the death of the Pope Honorius II. on February 14th, 1130. His death led to a double election to the papacy. On the same evening on which the Pope died, Cardinal Gregory, of St. Angelo, was proclaimed supreme Pontiff under the name of Innocent II., while another party went through the form of election with their Pope, dressed him in pontificals, and declared that Peter Leonis was the vicar of Christ, under the title of Anacletus II. Innocent fled from Rome to France, trusting in the allegiance of the nations of Northern Europe; and although Anacletus had been a monk of Cluny, that monastery produced a strong presumption in favour of Innocent by the recognition of his right. But the French bishops had not decided, although it became necessary immediately to decide. A council was convened at Etampes for the purpose of discussing the claims of the hostile Popes. To this council Bernard was very specially invited by the king and the chief bishops. He confessed afterwards that he went with much fear and trembling; nor are we surprised that on the road his eyes were saluted by a vision in which he saw a large church,

with all the people harmoniously praising God. This raised his spirits.

We can scarcely conceive the importance of such a schism as that which the council was called in some way to heal. Fasting and prayer preceded its deliberations, and no clearer impression can be conveyed of the immense fame and influence Bernard had acquired, than in the fact that the council unanimously agreed, first, that this business, which concerned God, should be entrusted to the man of God, and that his judgment should decide the assembly. We can scarcely think that this assembly was in great ignorance as to the verdict he was likely to pronounce; nor can we doubt that this, too, was one of the occasions when that felicitous and marvellous swell and sweep of all-subduing eloquence, which mighty councils and vast convocations of princes, barons, and scholars were destined yet many times to prove, exhibited much of its matchlessness. He rose obedient to the call and examined the whole question; the causes which led to the double election, the life and character of the first elected; as he advanced, it is said, the Holy Ghost seemed to speak through him. He pronounced Innocent, without hesitation or reserve, the legitimate Pope, and the only one they could accept as such, and, amidst acclamations and praises, and vows of obedience to Innocent, the council broke up. Henceforth, the way of Bernard lay much among the higher principalities and powers of Europe.

Immediately after the council it is interesting to find him meeting, face to face, with our own Henry I., the wisest soldier of his age, and the mightiest

monk of the cloisters of Christendom ; old knight and young priest ; and the young priest conquered the old knight, for Henry had been indisposed to acknowledge Innocent. The enthusiast convinced the man of the world. “Are you afraid,” said he, “of incurring sin if you acknowledge Innocent? think how to answer your other sins before God, and I will answer and take account of this one.” And Henry yielded to the quaint and not very polite reasoning. It is not wonderful that Innocent should regard Bernard as a necessary friend and adviser. Events, perhaps, subsequently prove that an Elijah-like kind of character was not the most comfortable companion for the Vatican ; but for the present he was necessary to the Pope. They met at Morigny near Etampes : they met also another man whom we shall presently see much more distinctly, who was one of the guests that night with the Abbot of Clairvaux at Morigny—Master Peter Abelard. Very shortly after this, Innocent, the early days of whose papacy were anything but tranquil, had to receive the comparative hostilities of the Emperor Lotharius at Liège. Once more Bernard came to the rescue. He boldly faced Lotharius, smoothed matters of difference between papal and imperial claims, persuaded the Emperor to acquiesce in the claims of Innocent ; finally, urged by Bernard, the Emperor went on foot through the crowd towards the Pope on his white palfrey, and when Innocent descended from his horse, the Emperor was there to assist him ; and thus, before all men, in that age of forms and ceremonies, he proclaimed his submission. There

was a strength of texture in the stuff of which these churchmen in those days were made, yet their temporalities had not reached the dangerous ambitiousness of more recent times, and we find Innocent spent some time at Clairvaux on his way homewards. He, perhaps, was surprised at the marvellous austerity, the self-restraint and solemn silence of the plain unornamented church, and the bare walls of the monastery. The monks received the brilliant cavalcade with closed lids ; they were seen of all and saw no one ; nor do they seem to have treated the Pope much better than they treated themselves : we read that if a stray fish could be caught it was reserved for the table of the Pope alone.

We must pass by the circumstances of the Council of Rheims ; and Bernard, after this powerful intercourse with the affairs and destinies of Europe, returned to the shades of his own beautiful vale—returned to leisure, rest, reflection, and solitude. Fifteen years had passed away since the grotesque foundation had been laid of the now famous monastery. From his obscurity he had emerged to place the tiara on the head of the chief of Christendom ; but he was regarded himself as the acknowledged chief of the most active minds of Europe and of the age. Clairvaux was growing outwardly and inwardly. Houses connected with it were rising in many parts of France ; and especially through the broad, unbroken solitudes of Yorkshire, where still, two of the loveliest ruins—Riveaux and Fontaines—keep the memory of Bernard alive, and relate the mind of the visitor to the crumbling wall. But Clairvaux itself was expanding ; it was too small. Numbers

were coming, and the existing site was quite insufficient for the necessities of the order—insufficient for the monks, especially for the visitors. Soon a nobler structure arose. Large grants of land were easily obtained, and every needful supply for the erection lavishly poured in. Still it was a little haven of shelter in the midst of a stormy sea. A strange and motley population, we know, assembled within those walls. Rough, strong, mediæval knights, men of appetites and passions, who had spent their days in intense animalism and blood-shedding, felt a spirit touch their hearts as they approached that place, or as its tidings approached them. They came in the repentance of sackcloth and in strange agonies of soul, bent their stiff, iron-clad knees before the altar and in the cloister. We read of some, their faces on the grass, foaming at the mouth. To this succeeded a period of peace; they entered the narrow pathway for life: a pathway now skirted by the gates of hell, now rising to the heights of heaven.

And is it not beautiful to think of Bernard returning to these his brethren, and his children, from those interviews we have seen him holding with the statesmen of his age; and in that same year, 1135, then aged forty-four, commencing to this congregation of miscellaneous hearts—some subdued and hushed to a peace deeper than that of woods, and clouds, and hills, a peace that passeth all understanding—and some wild, and fevered, and beating still—that series of discourses which have been called matchless, in which all the richness, the symbolism, the mystery, tenderness, and beauty of

the Ancient Church were pressed out—his sermons on the *Song of Solomon*? By these we suppose the name of Bernard will ever be most affectionately immortalized. They form one of the richest rose windows of the Mediæval Church. Let us read them as they should be read ; world-wearied and wasted, but sighing after peace. Let us think of ourselves as listening to them in those still, cool aisles, sometimes while the sun is climbing in the early morning over the forest trees and hills, and sometimes in what seems the more sweet and suitable hour of meditative twilight. In reading, it is imperatively necessary to dismiss from the mind all the refining casuistries of modern criticism ; but read by the spirit of the ancient Book, and with a transference of soul to the time, the place, the auditors, and preacher, there is something magical and sweet in their deep experiences. The preacher himself had been a man to whom life had been no child's play, who had thought of all the burden of the weary and intolerable world ; perhaps quite as much as any who suppose they have suffered more in this day of more fastidious tastes, sometimes mistaken for more acute sensibilities ; but he had passed through his novitiate, and had reached the peace spoken so deeply in every syllable of those discourses. There came sliding in the old monk, his mortifications almost done ; there the young beginner, scarcely yet habituated to a life so severe ; there the possessor of broad lands, relinquished now for Christ's sake ; labourers from the hot fields ; or, rising from the night's vigils, they gathered round the man whose words and conversation they verily

believed to be of another world. We must let the reader see something of these discourses, so long treasured in the scriptorium of the Church, that he may estimate their strength and beauty.

GOD ALL IN ALL.

“But who can grasp the magnitude of delight comprehended in that short word? God will be all in all. Not to speak of the body, I perceive three things in the soul—reason, will, memory; and these three make up the soul. How much each of these in this present world lacks of completion and perfectness, is felt by every one who walketh in the Spirit. Wherefore is this, except because God is not yet all in all? Therefore it is that our reason falters in judgment, that our will is feeble and distracted, that our memory confounds us by its forgetfulness. We are subjected unwillingly to this threefold weakness, but hope abides. For He who fills with good things the desires of the soul, He Himself will be to the reason the fulness of light; to the will, the abundance of peace; to the memory, the unbroken smoothness of eternity. O truth! O charity! O eternity; O blessed and blessing Trinity! to thee my miserable trinity miserably groans, while it is in exile from thee. Departing from thee, in what errors, griefs, and fears is it involved! Alas! for what a trinity have we exchanged Thee away. My heart is disturbed, and hence my grief; my strength has forsaken me, and hence my fear; the light of my eyes is not with me, and hence my error. O trinity of my soul! what a changed trinity dost thou show me in mine exile?

“But why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him,’ that is, when error shall have left my mind, sorrow my will, fears my memory; and serenity, sweetness, and eternal peace shall have come in their stead. The first of these things will be done by the God of truth; the

second, by the God of charity ; the third, by the God of omnipotence ; that God may be all in all : the reason receiving light inextinguishable, the will peace imperturbable, the memory cleaving to a fountain which shall never fail. You may judge for yourselves whether you would rightly assign the first to the Son, the second to the Holy Ghost, and the last to the Father ; in such a manner, however, that you take away nothing of any of them, either from the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost."

Of course, a deep mystical fervour pervades all these sermons, as in the following illustrative extract on

THE FEET OF GOD.

" But I must not pass over in silence those spiritual feet of God, which, in the first place, it behoves the penitent to kiss in a spiritual manner. I well know your curiosity, which does not willingly allow anything obscure to pass by it ; nor indeed is it a contemptible thing to know what are those feet which the Scripture so frequently mentions in connection with God. Sometimes He is mentioned as standing on them, as ' We will worship in the place where Thy feet have stood ; ' sometimes as walking, as ' I will dwell in them and will walk in them ; ' sometimes even as running, as ' He rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.' If it appear right to the apostle to call the head of Christ God, it appears to me as not unnatural to consider His feet as representing man—one of which I shall name mercy, and the other judgment. Those two words are known to you, and the Scripture makes mention of them in many places.

" On these two feet, fitly moving under one Divine head, Christ, born of a woman, He who was invisible under the law, then made Emmanuel [God with us], was seen on the earth, and conversed with men. Of a truth, He even now passes amongst us, relieving and healing those oppressed by

the devil ; but spiritually and invisibly. With these feet, I say, He walks through devout minds, incessantly purifying and searching the hearts and reins of the faithful.

“ Happy is that mind in which the Lord Jesus has placed both of these feet. You may recognise that mind by these two signs, which it must necessarily bear as the marks of the Divine footprints. These are hope and fear. The first representing the image of judgment, the other of mercy. Justly doth the Lord take pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy ; seeing that fear is the beginning of wisdom, of which also hope is the increase, and charity the consummation. These things being so, in this first kiss which is received at the feet, is not a little fruit ; only be careful that you are not robbed of either kiss. If you are pricked by the pain of sin and the fear of judgment, you have pressed your lips on the foot of judgment and truth. If you temper this fear and pain by regarding the Divine goodness, and by the hope of forgiveness, you may know that you have embraced the foot of mercy. It profits not to kiss one without the other, because the dwelling on judgment only casts you into the abyss of desperation, while a deceitful trust in mercy generates the worst kind of security.

“ To me also, wretched one, it has been given sometimes to sit beside the feet of the Lord Jesus, and with all devotion to embrace first one, then the other, as far as His loving-kindness condescended to permit me. But if ever, forgetful of mercy, through the stings of conscience I have dwelt too long on the thought of judgment, at once cast down with incredible fear and confusion, enveloped in dark shadows of horror, breathless from out of the deeps I cried, ‘ Who knoweth the power of Thy wrath, and through fear of Thee who can reckon Thy displeasure ? ’ if it has chanced that I have then clung too closely to the foot of mercy, after forsaking the other, such carelessness and indifference have come upon me, that my prayers have grown cold, my work

has been neglected, my speech has been less cautious, my laughter more ready, and the whole state of both my outer and inner man less firm. Learning then from experience, not judgment alone, nor mercy alone, but mercy and judgment together, will I sing unto Thee, O Lord ; I will never forget those justifications ; they both shall be my song in the house of my pilgrimage, until mercy being exalted above judgment, then misery shall cease, and my glory shall sing to Thee for ever, and not be silent.”

These were the discourses which charmed multitudes to the cloisters of Clairvaux. In our day the practical bias of life has so eclipsed and outstripped the speculative, that it is difficult to conceive how men could have renounced all earthly claims, and every earthly emolument and position, that they might have the opportunity of listening to such spiritual raptures, and indulging in the austere pleasures of the spiritual life. It is quite wonderful to us to see those man-slaying barons drawn into the monastic life, often as by a force they could not resist. Strange conversions took place. They hovered near the abbey, half knowing, half dreading their fate ; retired from it and returned, as a moth returns to the candle, with increased haste. Mr. Morison tells the stories of knights riding to a tournament, or a fair, putting up over night at the welcome and opportune monastery, and spending a quieter night than was usual with them. And the place, and solemnity, and order of the monastery had not been witnessed in vain. The psalm-singing, and the ceremonies, and the music of the frequent bells, sent emotions of awe and gentleness into the wearied hearts of some of them. Perhaps they

noticed some old companion in arms, who was heard last shouting in the shock of battle, now, instead, shouting Gregorian chants. The rude barbarian nature is touched, and stays, or returns, to seek peace in the monastery too. There was peace in the monastery, no doubt ; but those hearts which beat so vehemently beneath the cuirass and the breastplate, we may be sure, often chafed against the new rigours of the cage. The peace, however, which others felt—the peace which so profoundly breathes along the sermons on the Canticles, was scarcely the possession of the mighty Abbot. He experienced rather a foretaste of its pleasures, and presented it in his mellifluous eloquence. He was called upon in his vast correspondence to interfere, not only in the care of all the churches, but persons of distinction throughout Europe seem to have thought that Bernard's time, attention, and influence should be at their disposal—bishops in England, the Queen of Jerusalem, the Kings of France, and Italy, and Britain, and abbots and ecclesiastics without number.

And his brother Gerard fell sick and died ; he was one of the brethren of Clairvaux. The bereaved Abbot performed for him, whom he had most tenderly loved, the funeral service. The brother had been also tenderly and deeply loved by his brethren, and when his spirit passed away we are told how the sobs and tears of others, not less than those of Bernard, expressed their grief. Gerard was his second brother. He had been a bold knight, and had taken a worldly view of the Abbot's early enthusiasm. “Ah !” said the young

preacher, “tribulation will give thee understanding, and thou shalt fear greatly, but shalt in nowise perish.” There was a prophecy in the words: tribulation came. “I turn monk,” said he, “a monk of Citeaux.” He was one of his brother’s first converts. It was, upon the day of his death, one of Bernard’s duties to pursue his exposition of the Song of Songs, and at the appointed time he ascended the pulpit, and preached that funeral sermon, which is also one of the most famous of the whole course, from Solomon’s Song i. 5: “As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon”—that is, dark as is the first, comely as is the last.

And we quote again from these extraordinary expositions, so illustrative of the pulpit method of the cloisters of the Middle Ages—*As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

“We must begin from this point, because it was here that the preceding sermon was brought to a close. You are waiting to hear what these words mean, and how they are connected with the previous clause, since a comparison is made between them. Perhaps both members of the comparison, viz., ‘As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon,’ refer only to the first words, ‘I am black.’ It may be, however, that the simile is extended to both clauses, and each is compared with each. The former sense is the more simple, the latter the more obscure. Let us try both, beginning with the latter, which seems the more difficult. There is no difficulty, however, in the first comparison, ‘I am black as the tents of Kedar,’ but only in the last. For Kedar, which is interpreted to mean ‘darkness’ or ‘gloom,’ may be compared with blackness justly enough; but the curtains of Solomon are not so easily likened to beauty.

Moreover, who does not see that 'tents' fit harmoniously with the comparison? For what is the meaning of 'tents,' except our bodies, in which we sojourn for a time? Nor have we 'an abiding city, but we seek one to come.' In our bodies, as under tents, we carry on warfare. Truly, we are violent to take the kingdom. Indeed, the life of man here on earth is a warfare; and as long as we do battle in this body, we are absent from the Lord, *i.e.*, from the light. For the Lord is light, and so far as any one is not in Him, so far he is in darkness, *i.e.*, in Kedar. Let each one then acknowledge the sorrowful exclamation as his own: 'Woe is me that my sojourn is prolonged! I have dwelt with those who dwell in Kedar. My soul hath long sojourned in a strange land.' Therefore, this habitation of the body is not the mansion of the citizen, nor the house of the native, but either the soldier's tent or the traveller's inn. This body, I say, is a tent, and a tent of Kedar, because, by its interference, it prevents the soul from beholding the infinite light, nor does it allow her to see the light at all, except through a glass darkly, and not face to face.

'Do you not see whence blackness comes to the church; whence a certain rust cleaves to even the fairest souls? Doubtless, it comes from the tents of Kedar, from the practice of laborious warfare, from the long continuance of a painful sojourn, from the straits of our grievous exile, from our feeble, cumbersome bodies; for the corruptible body preseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. Therefore the soul's desire to be loosed, that being freed from the body they may fly into the embraces of Christ. Wherefore one of the miserable ones said, groaning—"Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" For a soul of this kind knoweth that, while in the tents of Kedar, she cannot be entirely free from spot or wrinkle, nor from some stains of blackness, and

wishes to go forth and to put them off. And here we have the reason why the spouse calls herself black as the tents of Kedar. But now, how is she beautiful as the curtains of Solomon ? Behind these curtains I feel that an indescribable holiness and sublimity are veiled, which I dare not presume to touch, save at the command of Him who shrouded and sealed the mystery. For I have read, 'He that is a searcher of Majesty shall be overwhelmed with the glory.' I pass on therefore. It will devolve on you, meanwhile, to obtain grace by your prayers, that we may the more readily, because more confidently, recur to a subject which needs attentive minds ; and it may be that the pious knocker at the door will discover what the bold explorer seeks in vain."

The bursting forth of the grief is most pathetic and beautiful. "It was fitting that I should depend for everything on him who was everything to me. He left me but little besides the name and honour of superintendent, for he did the work. I was called Abbot, but he monopolised the Abbot's cares."

"You know, my children, the reasonableness of my sorrow ; you know the lamentable wound I have received. You appreciate what a friend has left me in this walk of life which I have chosen—how prompt to labour, how gentle in manner ! Who was so necessary to me ? To whom was I equally dear ? He was my brother by blood, but more than brother by religion. Deplore my misfortune, I beseech you, who know these things. I was weak in body, and he sustained me ; downcast in spirit, and he comforted me ; slow and negligent, and he stimulated me ; careless and forgetful, and he admonished me. Whither hast thou been torn from me, whither hast thou been carried from my arms, O thou man of one mind with me, thou man after my

own heart? We loved each other in life; how are we separated in death! Oh most bitter separation, which nothing could have accomplished but death! For when wouldest thou have deserted me in life? Truly, a horrible divorce, altogether the work of death. Who would not have had pity on the sweet bond of our mutual love but death, the enemy of all sweetness? Well has raging death done his work; for, by taking one, he has stricken two. Is not this death to me also? Yea, verily, more to me than to Gerard—to me, to whom life is preserved, far gloomier than any death. I live that I may die living, and shall I call that life? How much more merciful, O stern death, hadst thou deprived me of the use, than of the fruit of life. For life without fruit is a more grievous death. Again, a double ruin is prepared for the unfruitful tree—the axe and the fire. Hating, therefore, the labours of my hands, thou hast removed from me the friend through whose zeal chiefly they bore fruit, if they ever did. Better would it have been for me, O Gerard! to have lost my life than thy presence, who wert the anxious instigator of my studies in the Lord, my faithful helper, my careful examiner. Why, I ask, have we loved, only to lose one another? Hard lot! but I am to be pitied, not he; for if thou, dear brother, hast lost dear ones they are replaced by dearer still; but what consolation awaits wretched me, deprived of thee, my only comfort? Equally pleasing to both was the companionship of our bodies by reason of the unison of our minds, but the separation has wounded only me. The joys of life were shared between us; its sadness and gloom are mine alone. God's wrathful displeasure goeth over me, and His indignation lieth hard upon me. The delights we derived from each other's society and conversation, I only have lost, whilst thou hast exchanged them for others, and in the exchange great has been thy gain.

“In place of us, dearest brother, whom thou hast not with thee to-day, what an exceeding multitude of joys and

blessings is thine ! Instead of me, thou hast Christ ; nor canst thou feel thy absence from thy brethren here, now that thou rejoicest in choruses of angels. Nothing, therefore, can make thee deplore the loss of our society, seeing that the Lord of Majesty and the hosts of Heaven vouchsafe to thee their presence. But what have I in thy stead ? What would I not give to know what thou now thinkest of thy Bernard, tottering amid cares and afflictions, and bereaved of thee, the staff of my weakness ? if indeed, it be permitted to one, who is plunged into the abyss of light and absorbed in the great ocean of eternal felicity, still to think of the miserable inhabitants of the earth. It may be that though thou knewest us in the flesh, thou knowest us no more, and since thou hast entered into the powers of the Lord, thou rememberest only His justice, forgetful of us. Moreover, he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit, and is entirely changed into one holy feeling ; neither can he think of or wish for aught but God and the things which God thinks and wishes, being full of God. But God is Love, and the more closely a man is united to God the fuller he is of love. Further, God is without passions, but not without sympathy, for His nature is always to have mercy and to spare. Therefore thou must needs be merciful, since thou art joined to the Merciful One ; although misery now be far from thee, thou canst compassionate others although thou sufferest not thyself. Thy love is not weakened, but changed. Nor because thou hast put on God hast thou laid aside all care for us, for ' He also careth for us.' Thou hast discarded thine infirmities, but not thy affections. ' Charity never faileth : ' thou wilt not forget me at the last.

" I fancy I hear my brother saying to me, ' Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' Truly it were lamentable if he did. Thou knowest, Gerard, where I am, where I lie, where

thou leftest me. No one is by to stretch forth a hand to me. I look, as I have been wont to do in every emergency, to Gerard, and he is not there. Then do I groan as one that hath no help. Whom shall I consult in doubtful matters? To whom shall I trust in trial and misfortune? Who will bear my burdens? Who will protect me from harm? Did not Gerard's eyes prevent my steps? Alas, my cares and anxieties entered more deeply into Gerard's breast than into my own, ravaged it more freely, wrung it more acutely. His wise and gentle speech saved me from secular conversation, and gave me to the silence which I loved. The Lord hath given him a learned tongue, so that he knew when it was proper to speak. By the prudence of his answers, and the grace given him from above, he so satisfied both our own people and strangers, that scarcely any one needed me who had previously seen Gerard. He hastened to meet the visitors, placing himself in the way lest they should disturb my leisure. Such as he could not dispose of himself, those he brought into me; the rest he sent away. O diligent man! O faithful friend!" *

Yes it is, we think, the most wonderful of funeral orations; and then that pathetic close: "And now my tears put an end to my words, I pray Thee teach me how to put an end to my tears."

To dwell upon all the minor details of the life of the illustrious Churchman, would be to write at length the history of the times. The year following that in which his brother died, 1140, when he was forty-nine years of age, that great duel was fought, which has never been allowed to pass from the

* I have quoted lengthily Mr. Morison's admirable and vigorous translation, for, indeed, this is one of the most wonderful of funeral orations.

memory, not merely of scholars, but even of cursory readers,—the contest of Bernard with the heresies of Abelard. Time forbids us to dwell upon the romantic history and fortunes of that most famous of heresiarchs. From his pages innumerable heretics have filled their minds with qualms and crotchetts, sometimes of conscience, more frequently of notion and opinion. Perhaps he may be best described by saying,—that what David Hume has been to our own and to the previous age, that Abelard was to his own and to the immediately subsequent times. He pierced into that dread domain in which men inquire for human and philosophical reasons—where they declare their wish to understand as well as believe. He and his disciples were the unconscious parents of a good deal. But when he was condemned and sent in custody to the monastery of St. Bernard, it is impossible not to feel the anguish which extorted from him that cry—“Good Jesus, where wast Thou then?” But he was a vain, sensitive, Rousseau-like being; yet it is also impossible not to notice how much of the noble there was in his character, and how he laboured, with practical earnestness, to reform many of the crying abuses of the Church. Upon Bernard, to whom religion was faith and certainty, or nothing, we can easily conceive he would look with a haughty and supercilious condescension and pity. We pass all his interesting relations with Heloise, which have also, no doubt, materially added to his fame. But the mind of the man could not rest and be still and silent, and he was the apostle of free inquiry. His inquiries had even pierced into the holiest of all—

the very ark of the Trinity. The disputes of the age were most significant; and Abelard and Bernard, as the foremost men, must inevitably come into collision. Bernard denounced the opinions of Abelard, and Abelard challenged Bernard to a logical disputation. All our readers know of that great gathering, that expected tournament at Sens, and how, to the amazement of that wonderful assembly, when the hour came, Abelard refused to plead, but appealed from his adversary and from the assembly, to Rome.

As Bernard drew near to the close of his life, his strength, like that of meaner men, became labour and sorrow, especially as the time came when he very earnestly desired to rest altogether. He was called to preach before the Pope, and the King of France, the second crusade. Vezelai was the place fixed for that wondrous gathering. The town could not hold the people assembled. The vast throng was convened upon the declivity of a hill, overlooking the plain of Vezelai; the king, Louis VII., and his queen were there; barons and knights, and innumerable multitudes of hardly wrought peasants. But king, or queen, or nobles were not the objects of attraction. Bernard of Clairvaux was there on the top of the hill. A high platform of wood was raised. On this stood the preacher and the king alone. Thence he could be seen by all, if not heard; and from those lips flew the words of love, aspiration, and sublime self-sacrifice. The wondrous light of that thin, calm face, the flash of tenderness and terror from those dove-like eyes, communicated themselves to the crowd. Then rose the cry for

“Crosses ! crosses !” the murmur from the vast sea of faces. He scattered them broadcast among the people. They were soon exhausted. He tore up his monk’s cowl to satisfy the demand. He did nothing but make crosses so long as he remained in the town. The mind of Europe spoke through Bernard. The crusade was proclaimed. And now he travelled through Germany to preach the second crusade at Friburg, Basle, Constance, Spires, Cologne, Frankfort, Mayence ; and, wherever he went, there the same tumult gathered round him. A daily repetition of the scene on the hill of Vezelai took place. A simultaneous rush of the whole population to see him and to hear him, and then the assumption of the cross by the larger portion of the able-bodied male inhabitants. Bernard says that scarcely one man was left to seven women. At Frankfort he nearly lost his life. The crowd so beset him that he was in danger of being suffocated. Conrad, the Emperor, for a time did his best to keep off the press ; but it was more than he could do. At last, laying aside his cloak, he gripped Bernard in his brawny arms, and hoisting him over his shoulders, carried him away in safety. A procession of miracles, too, attended him on his way ; but they astonished him. “I can’t think,” he says, “what these miracles mean.” It is altogether a sad, painful story of the fanaticism, not only of a great mind, but of the age. We turn with pleasure from his wild proclamation of the fanaticism of the sword against the Infidel, to his equally enthusiastic, and more noble and Christian defence of the Jews from the horrors of persecution. His defence of this much-misused people was one of

the few items of our saint's history in which he was in advance of his age.

The crusade was one long disaster ; and the fate of the mighty movement was sharply visited upon the head of its chief apostle. But other cares pressed upon him, especially the conquest of innumerable heresies, the writing of many books and letters connected with the defence of the faith, and also with efforts to repress the rising of the papacy, of which he only saw the beginning.

He died at the age of sixty-two. As he was dying, even ecclesiastics gathered round his dying bed to talk of public affairs ; but they could not interest him. "Marvel not," said he, "I am already no longer of this world." Earnest contendings of prayerful struggles went on around, and in the delirium of their grief, his friends implored him to stay ; and they created some contest in the mind of the expiring saint, but only to the lifting his eyes, and the expression of his wish that God's will might be done,—dying in the faith and practice of his great and memorable saying, "So far from being able to answer for my sins, I cannot answer even for my righteousness."

After all, were we to select the moment when we could most have wished to have seen and heard St. Bernard it would have been that summer evening of his brother's death.

We may suppose naturally, in accordance with general usage and monastic custom, his brother lying on the bier, in his presence in the church ; and thus the occasion fitted to one of the most tender and pathetic sermons which ever fell from

a preacher's lips. Its words of rich evangelic truth Luther might have uttered, and suggestive visions of a decaying body and a glorified spirit struggled for mastery through the words of the sermon. He saw his dead brother lying before him, wasted with disease ; there was "the tent of Kedar," of blackness. He looked up and saw the spirit walking in whiteness, and beautiful in the life and righteousness of the risen Saviour, and there he beheld him glorious "as the curtains of Solomon." At last in a passion of prayer he closed : "Thou gavest Gerard, O Lord; Thou hast taken him away ! and if I murmur that he is taken, I forget not that he was given. I render thanks that Thou didst deem me worthy to possess him." And then follows that surely ineffable close, which we have already quoted,—"And now my tears put an end to my words, I pray Thee, teach me how to put an end to my tears!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE FALSE FINERY OF THE PULPIT.

FALSE finery in the pulpit, or, as some one has too irreverently expressed it, the parson in his war paint. And indeed we have known specimens of pulpit finery which have filled us with more disgust than the wild attire of the Red Indian aborigines of the wild forests of Old America. Still, we must not be unjust ; there is a fashion in finery, and intellectual finery changes even as the attires of social life : the fine and stately style of pulpit eloquence is a relic of a bygone literary fashion, and the pulpit of our day is suffering rather from the slip-shod style of talk than from the stiff and stately. We remember a time when our fathers in the ministry could scarcely open their lips in conversation without magnificently rounding their periods ; too great an attention to rotund phraseology can scarcely be said to be the fault of the ministers of the present age. But the last age ! What shall we say of the pulpit eloquence of the times immediately preceding ours ? A friend tells us how, under singular circumstances, he dined with two brothers, both in the ministry ; this is now about thirty years since. They were both far beyond the age of threescore years and ten, they were ministers, and had both been

very distinguished ministers, of the old school ; they were both wealthy, the younger brother, at whose house they were dining, very wealthy. But our friend shall tell the story himself.

There were but four of us, myself as chaplain, and the wife of the younger brother ; all the appointments of the table were in the highest style of elegance and affluence ; a footman in livery stood behind each chair. I have dined with many a nobleman and millionaire, but I never saw anything to exceed that table on that occasion at any of the great tables of wealth and luxury. Well, as I said, there were but four of us ; it was the anniversary of the younger brother's wedding. His wife was indeed a very beautiful and charming woman, very admirable, and excellent, but nearly two generations younger than her husband, and yet a large part of all the grandeur was hers. At the close of the dinner rose the elder brother, the Rev. John ; had he been addressing a meeting at Exeter Hall, or making some after-dinner speech at the Mansion House, he could not have composed his sentences with a more accomplished pathos, or bade his words heave out with a more grotesque grandeur. "Dear Brother George," he said, "and you, dear, most engaging, and amiable sister, my feelings perfectly overwhelm me beneath the gracious pressure of this most auspicious and propitious occasion. Dear Brother George, occupying spheres not altogether of the most insignificant throughout our lives, and not greatly remote from each other"—they had both been for fifty years Congregational ministers within two miles of each other—"it enchants me that these,

which may be called your—as they certainly are my—declining days, should be enfolded amidst the amenities of such a delightful serenity, and oh ! how much more that your home should not only know the beauties and the graces of exquisite taste and urbanity, but that they owe so much to the charming presence of dear Sister, that presence which gilds with such an ineffable tenderness, I would dare to say lustre, the delicious valleys where we are yet reminded of setting suns.” A lot more followed like this. Well, I sat there perfectly bewildered in a stream of talk of this kind, only heaving with a crowd of Latinisms which have passed from my memory. Then up got the other one, and shot off in the same direction, only he was always more remarkable for a high and ornate style of speech. He never either could or would call a spade a spade ; he would have spoken of it as “that marvellous illustration of the inventive resources and manipulatory processes of the essential genius of the being we call man, wherewith we penetrate into those dark recesses beneath the mould, and by whose agency we compel coy and reluctant nature to deck herself in her mantle of virgin green.” That is just how he would have spoken of a spade had he been in a pulpit. On this occasion, gracefully invited by his brother to a waltz of words, forth he sported, and I think he outdid himself. As I said, there were four of us ; he had been in the habit of preaching to large and crowded and select audiences,—indeed, so had they both ;—he never talked in a finer style than he did at that dinner table. “Dear Brother John,” he said, “my heart is

keenly susceptible. Every emotion in my nature most tenderly reciprocates the amiable munificence in which you have so copiously expressed your fraternal regards, and you, my most beloved and engaging companion, in such a presence I need not hesitate to say the solace and sweetness of my existence. Dear Brother John, I survey with most ineffable satisfaction the long and singular but not unenlightened sinuosities along which we may be said to have moved the caravan of our career across the singular desert of our being. Emanations of one home, our course has been, in reference to our mutual regards, singularly felicitous, raised by a tender intercommunication of interests and by the appropriate dignities of non-intrusion, etc., etc."

These speeches were made standing ; I remember it well, and the blaze of light, and the blaze of plate too, and the whole munificence of the affair ; but the blaze of those speeches comes over my memory with a far more singular significance. To see those two old gentlemen standing up, leaning, as each was obliged to do, upon the table or upon his richly mounted cane, and tickling each other under the fifth rib like that, was a study. And yet this was the English pulpit two generations back. This we call the cambric frill style of eloquence.

Now what shall we say ?—that this was a pair of old Pecksniffs ? That would be unjust ; we knew both of those old gentlemen, and perfect gentlemen they were in heart and mind and character. Honoured and beloved they lived, honoured and beloved they died ; not a breath ever tarnished their name. To many of our readers they would seem a pair of Turvey-

drops. Their speeches, and especially the speech of the younger, would sound most ludicrous as illustrations of pulpit finery, but they only assure us that fashions change in speech as in coats ; and we may be sure that if we laugh at the rotund phraseology of those two old gentlemen, they would recoil in horror from much of ours ; ours, however, is not the only age which has produced a style of things altogether too "utterly too too." The age or the ages of fine pulpits has or have passed. But perhaps few of our readers have any idea of the gorgeousness and splendour of some of the pulpits on the continent of Europe. Readers of John Ruskin are not likely to forget his wise and eloquent words in "The Stones of Venice," in which he descants upon the mission and the power of the pulpit. Sitting in the Duomo, or chief church, of the Isola di Torcello—the mother island of the Venetian States,—sitting before the pulpit, impressive in the severe simplicity of its ancient and early beauty, an elevated train of thought passed through the mind of the brilliant critic as to the symbolism of the pulpit in all ages. English people who have not travelled have very little idea of either the magnitude or the magnificence of the pulpits of the Continent, although some splendid models may be seen in our South Kensington Museum. It would seem that, while some preachers have attempted *in* the pulpit the display of a gorgeous pomp of words and the artifices of a splendid rhetoric, others have attempted to convert the very wood, marble, and mosaics, into a sort of speechless Bossuet of fine carved work. The pulpit of the cathedral of Louvain does not date

beyond the year 1742, but it represents St. Peter on a rock and the conversion of St. Paul surmounted by palm trees ; the stricken horse and fallen rider are the admiration of all artists for their beauty of form and expression. But many of the pulpits of the Netherlands are remarkable for the strength and majesty of their wood carving. Sometimes they stand on pillars, representing, in life size, the prophets and the Evangelists ; sometimes the cunning of the artists has been displayed in the symbols of the four creatures of Ezekiel or the Revelation ; sometimes the preacher stands as before the tall stem and overshadowing branches of a noble tree, intended to symbolise the Tree of Life. In St. Andrew's in Antwerp, one of the most beautiful and singular of the carved pulpits of the Netherlands, represents Andrew and Peter called from their boats and nets by the Saviour. The pulpit was built by Van Hool ; the figures were executed by Van Ghul, and the picture of our Saviour has a dignity of expression it might be thought impossible the art of the wood carver could attain. Such are the pulpits of the Netherlands, characterized by a sombre magnificence. Crossing the Alps, and descending into the land of sunlight, the pulpits become far more light and spacious ; costly, but with the costliness of marbles and mosaics, and often abounding with meretricious ornament and display. All these varieties of art were no doubt passing through the mind and memory of Mr. Ruskin when the plain but very ancient pulpit of Torcello suggested to him the wise thoughts to which we referred above. "When the sermon is good," he says, "we need not

much concern ourselves about the form of the pulpit"; and then he goes on: "I believe, therefore, in the first place, that pulpits ought never to be highly decorated. The speaker is apt to look mean or diminutive if the pulpit is on a very large scale, or covered with splendid ornament. I have observed that, in almost all cathedrals, when the pulpits are peculiarly magnificent sermons are not often preached from *them*, but rather, and especially for any important purpose, from some temporary erection in other parts of the building"; and, a little further on, he continues:—"There are two ways of regarding a sermon—either as a human composition, or a Divine message. If we look upon it entirely as the first, and require our clergymen to finish it with their utmost care and learning for our better delight, whether of ear or intellect, we shall necessarily be led to expect much formality and stateliness in its delivery, and to think that all is not well if the pulpit have not a golden fringe round it and a goodly cushion in front of it, and if the sermon be not fairly written in a black book, to be smoothed upon the cushion in a majestic manner before beginning. All this we shall duly come to expect; but we shall, at the same time, consider the treatise thus prepared as something to which it is our duty to listen, without restlessness, for half an hour or three quarters, but which, when that duty has been decorously performed, we may dismiss from our minds in happy confidence of being provided with another when next it shall be necessary. But if once we begin to regard the preacher, whatever his faults, as a man sent with a message to us, which it is a matter of life or death

whether we hear or refuse ; if we look upon him as set in charge over many spirits in danger of ruin, and having allowed to him but an hour or two in the seven days to speak to them ; if we make some endeavour to conceive how precious those hours ought to be to him—a small vantage on the side of God—after his flock has been exposed for six days together to the full weight of the world's temptation, and he has been forced to watch the thorn and thistle springing in their hearts and to see what wheat had been scattered there snatched from the wayside by this wild bird and the other ; and at last, when, breathless and weary with the week's labour, they give him this interval of imperfect and languid hearing, he has but thirty minutes to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men, to convince them of all their weaknesses, to shame them for all their sins, to warn them of all their dangers, to try by this way and that to stir the hard fastenings of those doors where the Master Himself has stood and knocked, yet none opened, and to call at the opening of those dark streets where Wisdom herself has stretched forth her hands, and no man regarded—thirty minutes to raise the dead in ; let us but once understand and feel this, and we shall look with changed eyes upon that frippery of gay furniture about the place whence the message of judgment must be delivered, which either breathes upon the dry bones that they may live, or, if ineffectual, remains recorded in condemnation perhaps against the utterer and the listener alike, but assuredly against one of them. We shall not so easily bear with the silk and gold upon the seat of judgment,

nor with ornament of oratory in the mouth of the messenger ; we shall wish that his words may be simple, even when they are sweetest, and the place from whence he speaks like a marble rock in the desert, about which the people have gathered in their thirst." So speaks John Ruskin in this sublime extract ; the quotation has been long, and our apology to Mr. Ruskin, if that be necessary, is in what seems to us to be the exceeding weight and worth of his words.

And from the false finery of the pulpit itself, how easy and natural is the transition to the false finery *in* the pulpit—the false finery of words, the meretricious and finical adornments which have so often drawn the attention away from the reality and the truths which it is, and should ever be, the chief business of the preacher to present to the heart and to the mind,—as if it were of prime importance that the draught of water should be offered in a jewelled chalice or a rich porcelain vase. Robert Browning satirises this propensity when he says :—

" 'Ha ! is God mockèd,' as He asks ?
Shall I take upon me to change His tasks,
And dare, despatchèd to a river head
For a simple draught of the element,
Neglect the thing for which He sent,
And return with another thing instead !—
Saying, ' Because the water found
Welling up from underground
Is mingled with the taints of earth,
Therefore I turned from the oozings muddy,
And bring Thee a chalice I found instead :
What matters the water ? A hope I have nursed
That the waterless cup will quench my thirst.'
Better have knelt at the poorest stream

That trickles in pain from the straitest rift !
For the less or the more is all God's gift ;
I then, in ignorance and weakness,
Taking God's help, have attained to think
My heart does best to receive in meekness
That mode of worship as most to His mind
Where, earthly aids being cast behind,
His All in all appears serene,
With the thinnest human veil between,
Letting the mystic lamps, the Seven,
The many motions of His Spirit,
Pass as they list to earth from heaven.
For the preacher's merit or demerit,
It were to be wished the flaws were fewer
In the earthen vessel, holding treasure,
Which lies as save in a golden ewer ;
But the main thing is, does it hold good measure ?
Heaven soon sets right all other matters ! ”

Thus both orders of pulpit finery do remind us very naturally of that odd, perhaps not unpicturesque, but surely uncomfortable architecture of our fore-fathers described by Gray as an effort—

“ To raise the ceiling's fretted height,
Each panel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages that lead to nothing.”

There are many varieties of pulpit finery, but perhaps the simplest order is that of mere *pedantry*—the pedant is usually fond of interlarding his discourse with a little bit of Latin, or, perhaps, some word or two of possibly badly accented Greek ; the pedant is like that old man in Greece who, having a house to sell, took a brick from it in his pocket down to the market as a specimen of the building. Even so when we have heard some fine words, some

little and most inconsequential Latin or Greek quotation, we have said, "Ah! that is his little brick, but perhaps he has not the house after all!"

And this was an order of preaching well reproved by that mighty preacher and satirist of the seventeenth century Antony Vieyra, the Portuguese whom we quoted some pages back. He says: "It is possible to hear a preacher speaking in our own language and not to understand what he says. It seems sometimes necessary to have a vocabulary for the pulpit. I could wish, at all events, our preachers would be intelligible in their proper names, for they, in their ornateness, have rebaptized the saints, and every author whom they cite is an enigma. Thus they speak of '*the Penitent Sceptre*' and of '*the Evangelistic Apelles*', thus of '*the Eagle of Africa*', thus of '*the Honeycomb of Clairvaux*', of '*the Purple of Bethlehem*'! Do you call this quoting? They say that the Penitent Sceptre means David, the Evangelistic Apelles Luke, the Honeycomb of Clairvaux St. Bernard, the Purple of Bethlehem St. Jerome, the Eagle of Africa St. Augustine, the Mouth of Gold St. Chrysostom. But a man might take it the other way, and believe that the Purple of Bethlehem was Herod, the Eagle of Africa Scipio, the Mouth of Gold Midas. If a lawyer were thus to quote Bartolus, or Baldus, or any other great lawyer, would you trust your cause in his hands? If a man were to speak thus in conversation, would you not set him down as a fool? That, then, which is folly in ordinary life, why should it be wisdom in the pulpit?"

But we have noticed this vice in English preachers.

Charles Simeon was, as our readers all know, a great sermon-maker and a great critic of sermons. A young preacher was reading to him a sermon, hoping to receive his approbation, and reached the following passage: "Amidst the tumult and ecstacy of the children of Israel, the son of Amram stood unmoved." "The son of Amram!" interrupted Simeon, "the son of Amram! who was he?" "Why, sir, I meant Moses." "Then," exclaimed the critic, "if you meant Moses, why could you not say Moses?" It is astonishing what instances are before us. One sermon tells us that "*the pulchritude of truth is resultant from its homogeneity.*" Again, "when we take a comprehensive view of *this sublunary sphere*, it is inconceivably lamentable to discover everywhere among the children of men indubitable *evidences of a perverse proclivity to prevarication.*" Our old friend Falstaff put this better when he said, "Lord, how this world is given to lying!"

And while we are in this train of remark let us say there is a kind of pulpit finery which really amounts to bad language. We have heard of many quite ingenious attempts to dilute wine into water, or, to take another image, and one our readers will like better, to thicken milk into mud. A young preacher took a very good, luminous, and instructive text, which ought to have made him thoughtful, modest, and reverent: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." He divided that text, he said, "naturally," in the following pleasant fashion. He said, 1. "Here we have the transcendental properties

of the Divine nature—God is a Spirit. 2. We have there set before us the anthropomorphic relations under which those transcendental properties in Divine nature stand revealed—spirit and truth; and, 3. The symbolism under which those anthropomorphic relations to the transcendental properties of the Divine nature constitute worship.” Was not this a pretty illustration of what may be called the-house-that-Jack-built style of pulpit eloquence? The admirable Augustus de Morgan tells a capital story of some preacher who opened one of the divisions of his sermon thus: “Now, my brethren, let us proceed to make a logical incision into the psychology of God.” Another preacher of this style of eloquence begins a sermon thus: “The incomprehensibility of the apparatus developed in the machinery of the universe may be considered a supereminent manifestation of stupendous majesties, whether a man stand upon the platform of his own mind and ponders scrutinizingly on its undecipherable characters, or whether he looks abroad over the magnificent equipments and regalities of nature, surveying its amplitudes in all their scope and its unfathomabilities in all their profundities,” upon which an intelligent lady remarked, “I ought to have taken my dictionary instead of my Bible to church to-day!”

And to the same order also belongs the vermillion and gamboge style. The heads and sentences which we have given we did not hear ourselves, but we do remember, some years since, listening to a sermon by one who would be called a famous preacher; it was one of the great annual mission-

ary sermons ; the congregation was a crowded one ; in a certain sense it was select ; the sermon was full of pulpit finery. The object of the preacher was to show the triumphs of Christianity, and he a little shocked our sensibilities in the earlier part of his discourse by speaking in anticipation of the time "when religion should pillow her head on the bosom of philosophy," which also was a very pretty image if we follow the good advice of the ancient master of rhetoric, and paint our images before we speak them. We could not help exclaiming mentally, "Ah ! Mr. Preacher, had you but followed that wise advice, Paint your images before you employ them, and so test their fitness, we should not have been invited to that recumbent scene !" But this was nothing to what followed, and we think we stared aghast when, in order to illustrate the triumphs of the missionary, the preacher exclaimed, "Mark yon gory savage ! Often have those lips slaked their thirst in human blood ! There is a tear in yonder eye ; catch it ! Not all the orbs which wheel their way through the vast profundities of the far-off spheres and spaces, in their infinite rounds, can weigh in the mind of Omnipotence with yon pellucid orb !" This was wonderful language and wonderful imagery. But the revered old pastor of the church in which this remarkable oration was pronounced, himself one of the greatest preachers of his age, was—shall we dare to say it ?—in a rage in the vestry as he said to us, "What could the man mean, sir, by going up into my pulpit to talk such outrageous nonsense ?" The point of the reminiscence, however, is that here was a mere

piece of *pathos*, an image without a point or a discrimination, a piece of thoughtless word-mongering, scarcely even falling beneath the designation of finery.

We cannot help contrasting this imaginary tear of the imaginary savage with another reminiscence, in which we saw a whole congregation melted to real tears beneath a sudden touch ; it was when, in his own church at Chester, we were listening to that fountain of spontaneous affection Richard Knill ; it was a funeral service conducted on the occasion of the funeral of our great Duke of Wellington. The preacher had but a very short time before lost his only son ; but he pursued his way through a path of very natural thought suggested by the death of so highly eminent and illustrious a man, when all at once he exclaimed something to the following effect :—“Ah ! it is a great loss, a national loss, and that was a very great sight when all London poured out, and the representatives of all the crowns and thrones of Europe followed the great warrior to his tomb ! But”—and at this point the tears gushed out, and the preacher stood for a moment or two, the old man mastering himself, for he could not speak—“But, you know, ‘that did not come home to me and touch me as when I saw the body of my dear boy carried out of my house the other day.’” It was only a sudden stroke of speech, but there was probably not a dry eye in the whole of that large congregation. This was *pathos*, not so much eloquence as the touch of nature which “makes the whole world kin.”

Some men in the pulpit fancy they are nothing

unless their words are big. Their idea of eloquence is the *sesquipedalia verba*—words all very well in themselves, but put together on principle, as Lord Macaulay says, so as to mean nothing in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, having as much relation to eloquence as the colours in a Turkey carpet have to the colours in one of Raphael's paintings. Thus we meet with the following passage, in which the preacher desires to say that every man has a sense of deathlessness in him. He announced his doctrine in this pleasant fashion: "*The deep intuitive glance of the soul, penetrating beneath the surface and sphere of the superficial and phenomenal to the remote recesses of absolute being, adumbrates its own immortality in its precognitive conceptions.*"

They must have fine words and sonorous sentences; they seem to fulfil the conditions deemed essential to a great preacher in the estimate of a servant girl of Professor Wilson. She was a Scotch cook; De Quincey was staying with Wilson, and he sorely afflicted her spirit in the matter of mutton chops, and would sometimes address the astounded cook, couching his remarks in such terms as these: "Owing to dyspepsia afflicting my system and the possibility of any additional disarrangement of the stomach taking place, consequences incalculably distressing would arise, so much so, indeed, as to increase nervous irritation, and prevent me from attending to matters of overwhelming importance, if you do not remember to cut the mutton in a diagonal rather than a longitudinal form." The cook, as we have said a Scotch woman, had great

reverence for Mr. de Quincey as a man of genius, but after one of these interviews her patience was pretty well exhausted, and she said, "Weel, I ne'er heard the like o' you in a' my days. Eh, yon bodie has an awfu' sight o' words. If it had been my ain master that was wanting his dinner, he would ha' ordered a hale tablefu' wi' little mair than a wauf o' his haun' ; and here's a' this claver aboot a bit o' mutton no bigger than a preen chin. Mr. de Quinsnay would mak' a gran' preacher, though I am thinking a hantle o' the folk wouldna keer what he was driving at." There seem to be men who can only talk in this mighty fashion ; when great men do it—Johnsons, De Quinceys, and Chalmerses—we can only wonder, but they use words like themselves in a wonderful way ; but when little men do it they remind us of the child in Papa's greatcoat or a Liliputian in top-boots. Has not Dr. Parr, himself a sinner in this way, expressed it of the imitators of Johnson, "They had the nodosities of the oak without its vigour, and the contortions of the sibyl without her inspiration" ?

But there is another kind of false finery. The false finery is not limited to words. Bad language very frequently results from the attempt often made to make words carry too much ; if we do this, they will assuredly break down, for, at the very best, words are only symbols ; the thing itself, of which the word is the sign, must be more than the word—the word is only a poor finite medium, it may be, for some infinite thing. Think of the word *S, E, A, sea!* what is there in those letters to represent the mighty round on which the heavens are mirrored, on

which float the navies and the fleets of the world ? Or think of the word *sky* ! but what is there in that to represent that vast concave, with all its firmamental fires, its bright chronometry of days and years ? Think of the word *Love* ! but what is there in those four letters to represent that mysterious passion, the key of all history, the soul of all tragedy ? and then think of the word *G, O, D, God* ! three letters to represent the source and fountain of all things, the infinite all-comprehending consciousness ! Now, all these words are quite finite, and inadequate to the things or beings represented ; but they are true words, true symbols ; they cannot be improved upon, and they represent to us better than any other words could do that which is so signified.

But one of the most dangerous freaks of some men in our day—ministers and others—is the showing of a kind of pulpit finery in attempting to unfix words from their mooring. We have a gentleman in England who has attempted this on a very audacious scale, Mr. Matthew Arnold, our apostle of light and sweetness, or, as we more frequently call him, our English prophet Jeremiah in kid gloves. In his book “Literature and Dogma,” a book which has had an extensive audience, he pleads earnestly for the unfixing words from their moorings. He says that the language of the Bible is floating, fluid, passing, rhetorical, literary, not rigid, fixed, and scientific, and that Paul uses the words *grace*, new birth, justification, repentance, sanctification, in a floating and fluid manner, just as men use the terms of eloquence and poetry ; then he goes on to apply his reasoning

to the word God, says it has no distinct meaning, that the word triangle is definite, but these theological terms are indefinite. Now, it is at this point, we say, let us be sure that we do not overburden words, that we do not attempt to make them carry what they were never intended to carry, but, on the other hand, make them carry their own weight, and by this test them if they be true words, for, thus holding fast the form of sound words, we shall find they test themselves in our consciousness. After all, we know them as we know other words—by our knowledge of that which they were intended to represent or to signify. Floating, fluid, poetical expressions! what of the terms arithmetic, mathematics, and navigation? They are, and they must be unalterably fixed. How can we steer the vessels if the knowledge of the planets be floating, fluid, and poetical? The Pleiades and Jupiter may be poetical designations for heavenly bodies, but they exist in the firmament to us as positive facts, and David Hume has said, our nation could not be great in commerce and manufactures were it not acquainted with the Belts of Jupiter; it is a remote and recondite inference, but it is easy to perceive his meaning; and those terms grace, and repentance, and justification, and sanctification represent not floating analogues, but fixed ideas in human consciousness, and we know them by what we find as wanting or satisfied in ourselves and expressed by our own consciousness.

This learned pretentiousness in which some, at any rate, of our English pulpits are prone to indulge, in which a real philosophic ignorance seeks to cover

itself with a veil of words, while it dangerously attempts to unfix true words from their moorings and their meanings, has been well satirised by Dean Mansell. Some will perhaps be surprised that the great expositor and most favoured pupil of Sir William Hamilton could use so queer a stylograph. We are far from accepting Dean Mansell's philosophy, while we admire his satire and his genius.

“ With a bug, bug, bug, and a hum, hum, hum,
 Hither we mighty Philosophers come !
 Professors we,
 From over the sea,
 From the land where Professors in plenty be ;
 And we thrive and flourish, as well we may,
 In the land that produced one Kant with a K
 And many Cants with a C.
 Where Hegel taught, to his profit and fame,
 That something and nothing were one and the same,
 The absolute difference never a jot being
 'Twixt having and not having, being and not being,
 Where, reared by Oken's plastic hands,
 The Eternal Nothing of Nature stands ;
 And Theology sits on her throne of pride,
 As Arithmetic personified ;
 So we change to a gladder and livelier strain,
 For great god Pan is alive again ;
 He lives and he reigns once more.
 With deep intuition and mystic rite,
 We worship the Absolute-Infinite,
 The Universe-Ego, the Plenary-Void,
 The Subject-Object identified,
 The Great Nothing-Something, the Being-Thought,
 That mouldeth the mass of Chaotic-Nought.
 With a bug, bug, bug, and a hum, hum, hum,
 Hither we great Professors come ! ” *

* Letters, Lectures, and Reviews by Dean Mansell—*Phrontisterion*, pp. 401-403.

When words are used in this fashion, they go wandering about like ghosts without clothes, things that ought to be ashamed of themselves, saying, "Where are we? Who will own us?" like the letter put into the box of the post office addressed "John Smith." Poor letter! it never reached its destination, the case with how many words which aim at nothing and hit it!

But there is another order of pulpit finery. How many instances we can call to mind of sermons in which the false finery has only given a ridiculous aspect to the whole discourse. We have always disliked the method of tickling a text for the purpose of extorting some hidden secret, which, indeed, as it never contained, so it was never intended to reveal, but which was trotted forth by the preacher's ingenuity. Robert Robinson, in his most interesting and entertaining notes to Claude on the composition of a sermon, quotes from a discourse by Father Selle, a celebrated French Dominican, from the text "I do set My bow in the cloud," surely a very sweetly suggestive text, and one upon which a pious mind might easily play in an exceedingly elevating and comfortable manner. The first words of Father Selle are not very exceptionable; he says, "It is not enough for the celestial rainbow to please the eye, and it conveys the richest consolation into the heart, the word of God having constituted it the happy presage of tranquillity and peace—'I do set My bow in the cloud'"; but then the preacher goes on to show how the bow enriched with clouds becomes the crown of the world, the gracefulness of the air, the garland of the universe, the salubrity of

heaven, the pomp of nature, the triumph of serenity, the ensign of love, the picture of clemency, the messenger of liberality, the mansion of amorous smiles, the rich stanza of pleasure, in fine the trumpet of peace, for “I do set My bow in the cloud.” After this strange muddle of incongruous images and mixed metaphors, the preacher took another flight in a strain too ridiculous, if not too irreverent, to quote. Yet we will give you the closing paragraphs:—

“ It is a bow, gentlemen, with which the roaring thunder being appeased, the heavenly Orpheus, in order insensibly to enchant the whole creation, already become immovable by His Divine harmony, plays upon the violin of this universe, which has as many strings as it has elements, for ‘*I do set My bow in the cloud.*’ Yes, it is a *bow* in which we see Mars, the eternal god of war, who was just now ready to overwhelm the world with tempest, metamorphosed into a god of love. Yes, it is a bow all gilded with golden rays—a silver dew—a theatre of emeralds, rubies, and diamonds, to increase the riches of this poor beggarly world ; but, you perceive, gentlemen, I am speaking of that celestial rainbow, that bow in the cloud, Mary Magdalene” ! So that Mary Magdalene is like a rainbow, and a rainbow is like a fiddlestick !

An impetuous fancy will often carry even a faithful preacher, who possesses these attributes, and who has not severely disciplined his style in the study, into a prurient indulgence in words which hang like gilded tassels and false fringes of speech upon his discourse. But it has been very truly said

the man who deliberately goes into a pulpit to utter a fine thing is guilty of a great sin. Then, again, sometimes even a sincere desire to open or elucidate Scripture has led to a solemn trifling, which has indeed illustrated the preacher's ingenuity in a play of idle fancy. Van der Meulen, of Utrecht, in his dissertations published in 1713, furnishes an illustration of what we mean. The text from which the good man discourses is Genesis ii. 21, 22: "And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made He a woman." Upon this the preacher proceeded to inquire, "First, was the rib taken from the right or the left side of Adam? Second, was Adam, after the loss of that rib, a maimed or an imperfect man?"

Very grave and important questions for discussion in the pulpit. Then he proceeds; "Thirdly, why was Eve formed of a rib and not of the dust of the ground? Had Eve been formed of the dust of the ground, she would have been a stranger to Adam; had she been created out of his foot, he might have despised her or trampled on her, as being very much his inferior; had she been produced out of his head, she might have taken too much upon herself and pretended to domineer; it was therefore more proper she should be taken from the middle of Adam's body, on which account he could not but have a due esteem for her." And then the preacher cites, in confirmation of this so important a doctrine, the words of Thomas Aquinas, the angelical doctor, and also those of the Master of the Sentences, Duns Scotus, who says: "I take thee to be, not my

mistress, nor my servant, but my wife." This childish love of the marvellous, this silly desire of uttering sparkling things before the eyes or the ears of a congregation, has led many a good man astray by the discovery of false brilliants in the word of God which assuredly the Divine Spirit never put there.

It was a golden motto of Horace "not to produce smoke from light, but light from smoke"; but such gentlemen reverse the canon, and transpose it to smoke from light; they seem to set traps to catch texts, and when we hear of them we think of that good and holy mollah who, going into a Turkish mosque, and hearing one, with a very harsh and disagreeable voice, reading the Koran in a very loud tone, went to him and said, "What is your monthly stipend?" "Nothing." "Then why give yourself so much trouble?" and he replied, "I am *reading for the sake of God*"; then the good and holy mollah replied, "*For God's sake do not read, for if you read the Book after this fashion, you will drive souls into the pit!*"

It does not follow because a preacher selects a singular topic or text, and deals with it even in a singular and original manner, that he shall wander, like Van der Meulen, into the grotesque, or, like Father Selle, into the irreverent.

How different is all this from the usually judicious management of dear old Matthew Henry, whose ingenuity was certainly equalled by his solidity of judgment. Take his sermon on Ephesians iv. 22, 24: "Put off the old man; put on the new," in which he brings out in four particulars what it is to die of sin, what it is to live to righteousness.

“In Particular.

- “1. Put off *Pride* (Jer. xiii. 15); put on *Humility* (1 Peter v. 5).
- “2. Put off *Passion* (Col. iii. 8); put on *Meekness* (1 Peter iii. 4).
- “3. Put off *Covetousness* (Heb. xiii. 5); put on *Contentment* (Heb. xiii. 5).
- “4. Put off *Contention* (Gen. xiii. 8); put on *Peaceableness* (James iii. 7).”

There can be no doubt that hearers do delight in the exhibition of ingenuity in dealing with a subject, and foolish preachers have often conformed themselves to this taste in a very reprehensible style; but Matthew Henry has, in an especial manner, shown how this ingenuity may be employed in a most useful and exemplary fashion. Probably no circumstance in Scripture seems less likely to furnish a fruitful, pleasant, and instructive discourse than that instance when the Ethiopian, Ebed-melech, drew Jeremiah out of the dungeon with “cords, old cast clouts, and rotten rags.” Now notice how Matthew Henry turns the story to use: “First fact—A prophet is in a dungeon,” from which he observes, “It is common for wicked people to look upon God’s faithful ministers as their enemies.” “Second fact—The king could not help him”; observation, “Those will have a great deal to answer for who, though they have a secret kindness for good people, dare not own it in a time of need.” “Third fact—Ebed-melech was an Ethiopian”; observation, “Some Gentiles have more piety and equity and sense of right than some Jews,” etc., etc. “Fourth fact—

Ebed-melech was a courtier"; observation, "God has a remnant in all places, and among all sorts; there were even saints in Cæsar's household." "Fifth fact—The king was sitting in the gate on public business when Ebed-melech applied to him for the release of Jeremiah"; observation, "Whither should oppressed innocence flee for protection but to the throne? No time must be lost when life is in danger, especially a valuable life; God can raise up friends for His people in distress when they little thought of them." "Sixth fact—The king orders his release"; observation, "The hearts of kings are in God's hands; let this encourage us to appear boldly for God; we may succeed better than we could have thought." "Eighth fact—Ebed-melech took old cloths and rags from under the treasury in the king's house"; observation, "No waste should be made even in kings' palaces; broken linen, like broken meat, should be preserved for the use of the poor." "Ninth fact—Ebed-melech directed Jeremiah to put the soft rags under his arm-holes"; observation, "Distressed people should be relieved with tenderness." "Tenth fact—Ebed-melech did not throw the rags down, but let them down by cords"; observation, "The poor should be relieved with respect," etc., etc. This is ingenious, but it is solid.

But the manifestations of false finery in the pulpit are very manifold, and many of those to which we have referred are of a far more serious description than the instances of the old gentlemen whom we mentioned at the commencement of this chapter. Indeed, there was nothing unreal about those dignified old rhetoricians; they were the remnants

of the age of Johnson, characters satirised in that odd and clever but forgotten satire *Lexiphanes*. James Hervey and Edward Young wrote something after that ponderous fashion, and we do not doubt their reality. When one of those old gentlemen—it was the “Brother George”—stepped forth on a platform once to move a vote of thanks to one of the most illustrious bishops of the English Church upon the occasion of his presiding at a meeting of the Bible Society, he said he had always regarded the bishops of the Church of England as the most brilliant diamonds in the monarch’s crown; he a little broke the unity of the figure by adding that the most splendid diamond always derived a very especial lustre from its setting, and he was quite certain that no setting could so befit and confer brilliancy upon the diamond as that in which they saw the right reverend prelate before them,—the chair of the Bible Society! Well, this sort of speech would not be very graciously received nowadays; but it was a way those old folks had, and we are far from using the instance for the purpose of impeaching the reality and truthfulness of their character.

We should be the last to plead for any falsehood or simulation of manners; still we think that a gravity, a reserve, and even reticence of deportment, and an accompanying carefulness of speech, are not without their effect in producing a sense of respect among men.

We remember when we were young our old minister; he lived on the verge of a retreating generation of things. We looked up to him with

a sense of awe such as we are perfectly certain it is now utterly beyond the power of any children to realize for their pastors. His appearance was remarkable ; he always came to us attired in knee-breeches, black silk stockings, and with silver buckles to his shoes ; beneath his arm, his gold-headed cane ; the style of his speech was also of the gold-headed and silver-buckle description ; and when he patted us on the head and addressed two or three words to us, our heart was all of a flutter,—

“ It was e’en as if an angel shook his wings.”

And was not that better than the rowdyism frequently to be detected in the ministry of the present day ? We beg to say, for our part, that to us a minister is a minister, and, being such, he not only has a character to maintain, but a peculiar character—a character, we think, which should be as venerable as that of a judge ; and what should we think of a judge, a platform-haunting, newspaper-editing, noisy, blatant, vociferating man, always ready with his knuckles, carrying respectability neither in his character nor his appearance, reducing the idea of his profession to a trade ? What should we think of him ? And, without being offensive, it is to be feared this is where the office of the ministry has suffered and is suffering. Two spirits have ensnared and fairly got the better of it—the trade spirit and the political spirit ; and the language has lost something of its old polish because character has lost its polish and its dignity too.

This may seem to many to reckon up the account too smartly and sharply ; we may, therefore, in some

measure, condone what may seem a rough estimate by admitting that a rude and rough reality is the characteristic of the age, and the monarchs of the pulpit have yielded themselves, perhaps even too much, to the rough spirit demanded by the times. It may be thought that we have too simply dwelt upon the corruption of pulpit eloquence, without sufficiently analysing the cause ; it may be at once said that nothing can sustain its lofty tone but an elevated sense of the purity and reality of the spiritual life.

But, before we close, it will be expected that we make some remarks upon the true ornaments of a sermon. For a preacher may be really ornamental while yet he disdains the mere study of finery ; he may be ornamental as a jasmine or an eglantine ; he will not desire to pass muster as a merely ornamental preacher ; he will not put his sermons into a turning lathe, nor exercise upon them the ingenuity of a mere wood carver. The merely ornamental preacher is strange at this ; with what paternal tenderness he regards his little verbal darlings ! he writes them out, and rewrites, and touches them up, and retouches, pats them on the head, and trots them up and down his study, holds them up to the looking-glass, tucks them up pleasantly, and rocks them in the cradle of anticipated success, carefully insinuating the faintest possible suspicion of thought to the largest possible quantity of words, which, also, is very much like what the great statesman, Sir Robert Peel, spoke of as a kind of eloquence which has “ the smallest possible quantity of common-sense enveloped in the greatest number of equivocal words.”

A wonderful means of grace your ornamental preacher,—the man who lays himself out to work up fine things, and never suspects that a night may come in which God may say to him, “*Thou fool!*”

We love Jeremy Taylor, and it is exceedingly delightful to read many of his sermons; but it sometimes seems a fair question to ask how far they could—how far many of them could—have been of any possible use to the persons who listened to them. They are rich mosaics, and they remind us of those splendid pulpits to which we have referred; they are full of rich and rare learning, and strains of what may in truth be called splendid poetry, brilliant coruscations of genius; but they are often a magnificent robe which only hides the beauty of the figure; or a rapid series of dissolving views, which rather divert than fix the attention. We have no love for Dr. South; with all his strength, and frequent reality of wit, he is far too coarse, as he was far too much of a time-server for our taste; and we have no doubt that no small amount of jealousy of Taylor mingled with a criticism which is, beyond all doubt, intended for him and for his style. When speaking of the preaching of Paul, from the text, “We preach not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom,” Dr. South says, “We have nothing here of ‘the fringes of the north star’; nothing of ‘nature’s becoming unnatural’; nothing of ‘the down of angels’ wings,’ nor ‘the beautiful locks of the cherubim’; no starched similitudes, with a ‘Thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion,’ and the like; no, these were

sublimities above the rise of the apostolic spirit. The apostles, poor mortals, were content to take much lower steps, and to tell the world in plain terms, 'He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,' but they made their hearers cry out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" We need not quote more of South's criticisms ; they were like the man—harsh, coarse, and unkind, and with a dash of falsehood ; but they contain not the less a just denunciation of finery in the pulpit.

And this kind of verbal finery is mostly, at best, only beautiful frost work ; for, as a rule, the presence of meretricious ornament implies the absence of feeling ; it is cold itself, and creates its like. Once in our night visions we beheld, and lo ! we stood before a vast stone church. We thought that the petrifying waters of time, and the rolling ages, had turned all the mighty temple of the praise and faith of the human heart into stone. We entered ; it was vast and mighty, but cold, how cold ! We thought we paced to and fro its aisles, the only living being in it, for it seemed to us that all its occupants were frozen into stone ; the pulpit was stone, the minister was stone, the altar was stone, and at its stony altar, a stony priest conducted the mummery of a stony service. We thought we heard as it were the muttered chant of prayers, but as they ascended, they froze and turned to gelid frost, and hung in icicles on the roof and corbels of the place ; it was all stone—ice and stone ! Then we thought we saw as it were a dove hover over the place ; we heard voices

saying, “Live!” we felt a breath of life rushing among the stones, and lo! we saw the stones move at the voices of them that cried, and the stones were alive, stones no more, but souls! The seats became tenanted with life, the pulpit with life; the altar and the priest became alive! Still more strange, the very icicles on the corbels and on the roof became sympathies, the roof melted, and, in place of all, lo! living spiritual beings. Old things had passed away, and instead of the cold stone tabernacle, we stood in the “general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names were written in heaven,” and we beheld Mount Zion thronged with “the spirits of just men made perfect.”*

And, no doubt, a preacher may do this—has done this—again and again, and will do it again and again, when thought and feeling go forth in search of expression. Very beautiful they are when they meet, those *three* sisters! Eldest-born, no doubt, is the Lady of Feeling,—to allegorize something after the manner of De Quincy in *Suspiria de Profundis*,—the dark-eyed and lovely one, her radiant tresses and white attire floating, as clouds float so rapidly, even when they seem not to move at all. She loves solitude, this Lady of Feeling; she delights to take her own course, and to fix her eye on objects for the pleasure her own love.

But men have, somehow, in this age learned to love her younger sister, the Lady of Thought, better than the elder. She seems more serious in her

* See *Sermons*. By Edwin Paxton Hood. 1859.

fairness ; her tresses are bound, her movements are slower and more stately, and her eyes have often a downward glance ; but we have loved to see the two sisters, Feeling and Thought, hand in hand together.

Singular how seldom the third sister of the three, the Lady of Expression, keeps them company. Yet she needs their more matronly guidance, too ; for, in truth, she can be wild and hoydenish, and ever is so unless when the hand of her elder, or the eye of her second sister is upon her. But when the three walk together, as we have often seen them, the Lady of Feeling, the Lady of Thought, and the Lady of Expression, it is then we learn how Feeling can subdue us, how Thought can lift us, and how Expression can penetrate us, for each sister subdues the other, and each lends to the grace of each. And there is no danger of finery in the pulpit when the preacher seeks the fitting mould of expression into which to pour the red-hot metal of feeling and of thought ; for there are words which make thoughts and emotions to shine, even like opals or rubies, in some setting of jewelled expression. There are certain words which, like any precious stone, derive an amazing power to delight from the setting in which they are seen. The true man will determine that he will renounce all tinselled and theatic finery, but he will not fling aside the power of sustained and rhythmic utterance ; he will even court and facilitate attention ; and if broken and angular his words, he will have them to stand out like *aiguilles*, each complete in itself, and reflecting like some Alpine peak, beneath a rising or a setting sun, some beautiful light.

CHAPTER V.

JEREMY TAYLOR

USUALLY CALLED THE ENGLISH CHRYSOSTOM OF DIVINES.

SOME of the closing words of the preceding chapter may seem to have an accent of injustice towards this eminent occupant of the Throne of Eloquence. It cannot be out of place to devote some pages to the consideration of the life and words of one of the most beautiful and beloved prelates of the English Church; the more necessary, because the severity of some recent criticisms seem deprecative of the unquestionably too highly ornamental brilliancy of his style;—a style, no doubt, perfectly natural to him, but which has been regarded as savouring too much, frequently, of the meretricious and gaudy. We have been led to retrace our impressions of the character of these writings by some remarks in a number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* by Dr. Withington, of Massachusetts;—remarks we cannot but regard as cast in far too deprecatory a vein. Dr. Withington regards this great poet, and Milton of the pulpit, as simply “playing his coruscations like dissolving views before his audience,” and as being “so mindful of his robe, that his hearers become regardless of the form or

truth beneath it." The lovers of the bishop will be pleased to find that the same disposition to depreciation extends to Thomas Fuller, and to George Herbert. The critic quotes with admiration, quite unmixed, South's undoubted characterization of Jeremy Taylor, to which we have already referred. That rough, surly, and cautious renegade was, by the primary temperament of his mind, and his apparent utter want of Christian experience, unfitted to appreciate a spirit so tender, an intuitional nature so rich and beautiful as Taylor's. Dr. Withington admits that there was a malicious skill in South's criticism, in which he separates and isolates expressions ; it might be added that everything that South touched for the purpose of criticising it was touched with the spirit of a coarse ribald. To expect a judicious opinion on such matters from such a man would be as wise as to expect a navvy to do the work of an angel. The passage to which Dr. Withington alludes is in South's eleventh sermon, in the fifth volume, and is that which we have already quoted.* It must be admitted the criticism was very clever, and as unrighteous as it was clever ; and it abates our surprise at the insolent buffoonery with which South regaled his auditors in Westminster Abbey, when he had to traduce Cromwell,—to whom, when at college, he had inscribed a Latin eulogy—or to traduce the Puritans, to whom he seems at one time to have belonged—when we find a dignitary of his own Church, who had lived a martyr to his convictions, held up to the same ridicule.

* See page 132.

We have not purposed narrating at any length the circumstances of the life of Jeremy Taylor ; little more is known of it than the more marked ways along which he travelled ; it could, however, have been by no means devoid of interest. Cambridge, more remarkable as being the nurse than the mother of great men, was his birthplace, where his father appears to have followed the humble occupation of a barber. Lowly, however, as was his immediate origin, he derives his ancestry from Dr. Rowland Taylor, one of the bright ornaments of the Reformation, the martyr of Hadleigh, in Suffolk.

He was born in 1613 ; his education began early, for at the age of three he was sent to the free school in his native town, and at the age of thirteen he was admitted a sizar of Caius College ; in his eighteenth year he was admitted Master of Arts, and to such an extent had he carried his theological studies, that he was thought worthy of admission into holy orders before he attained the age of twenty-one, when he was called to lecture in St. Paul's Cathedral, where he attracted the attention of Archbishop Laud, who preferred him to a fellowship of the University of Oxford ; he also became chaplain to Laud, chaplain to the king, and rector of Uppingham, in Rutlandshire, which was a very small village. While here he exposed himself to the suspicion of attachment to the Church of Rome ; there were many reasons which made this not improbable ; not merely from his relation to Laud, and the favours he had received from the hands of that man, but from his intimacy with a Franciscan friar, who had sunk his English

name in that of Fra. St. Clara. There seems, however, to have been no foundation for the suspicion ; his catholic, amiable, and, perhaps, too sensuous imagination and fancy found, no doubt, many sympathetic attractions in the Romish Church ; but it was at this very period of his life that he spoke of Romanists as those who "serve the Pope in all things, and Jesus Christ in some." Coleridge thought that Taylor, in some form or other, believed in purgatory ; but with bitter sarcasm he has expressed his sense of that doctrine when he says, "A Romanist may come out of purgatory upon reasonable terms, in case he should think fit to go thither."

Two years after his presentation to Uppingham, he married Phœbe Langdale. No information has reached us concerning the family of his wife. Amidst the plain rural scenes of his village he passed a few years ; but it was at the period when all things in England were becoming unhinged. Darkness was gathering round the country parsonage ; his great patron, Laud, was impeached, imprisoned, and beheaded ; and the first effort of Taylor's pen was "A Plea for Episcopacy." The same year the king raised his standard at Nottingham, and Taylor, as the king's most beloved chaplain, joined the royal army. There were other reasons which pushed him from his country seclusion. In the early part of the year he lost his youngest child, whose mother soon followed. The rector, among his last registrations, placed the name of his child and his wife. As we have seen, he followed with the army, and a parliamentary resolution sequestrating his village, rendered his return as its minister impossible.

To a mind like that of Taylor those five years of retirement in pastoral life may be conceived of as having been very precious ; he was a young man, and, in spite of his obscure birth, he had touched at once almost the extreme prospect of success and prosperity ; married life opening to him in the seclusion of a country village ; his name known, and his character appreciated by the king ; his magnificent genius preparing itself for its glowing and glorious flight of power ;—suddenly all was eclipsed : his wife and child in the grave ; his first benefactor led to the block ; himself an outcast from his village, waiting for a few brief months on the footsteps of his sovereign, who was soon as helpless as his chaplain. Mr. Willmott, his latest and most popular biographer, has done well to notice the frequent use Taylor makes of the stirring life of the camp in his eloquent writings. The men of that time whose words were most teaching, frequently studied in such a school. The witty Fuller picked up his stories and quaintness as he followed in the rear of a marching regiment ; Pearson was chaplain to the king's troops at Exeter ; Chillingworth acted as engineer at the siege of Gloucester ; even Barrow knew what it was to stand to his gun ; and we know how Baxter hovered for a long season with the armies of the Parliament in many parts of England. We cannot follow the footsteps of Taylor, but it is to be believed that he was on several of these well-fought fields, where the strength of Roundhead and Cavalier came into rude collision.

Mr. Willmott says :—

“ But I am not aware that any of his biographers or critics have pointed out the vividness and number of his

martial images. Keble proves the military experience of Homer from the allusions to arms and combats; and the reader of Taylor's sermons often finds himself hurried into the tumult of the camp, or the terrors of the conflict, by the same freshness and truth of description. A striking example occurs in his discourse entitled, 'Apples of Sodom,' where he represents the sinner overcome by the violence of a strong temptation, and awaking, when the fever subsides, to the full horror and peril of his condition. 'But *so have I known* a bolder trooper fight in the confusion of a battle, and, being warm with heat and rage, receive from the sword of his enemy wounds open like a grave; but he felt them not; and when, by the streams of blood, he found himself marked for pain, he refused to consider then what he was to feel to-morrow; but when his rage hath cooled into the temper of a man, and clammy moisture hath checked the fiery emission of spirits, he wonders at his own boldness, and blames his fate, and needs a mighty patience to bear his great calamity.'

"The wounded trooper carries us back to Naseby, or Marston-Moor. The following sketch of a humbler hero bears indications of having been painted from life:—

“‘And what can we complain of the weakness of our strength, or the pressure of disease, when we see a poor soldier stand in a breach, almost starved with cold and hunger, and his cold apt to be relieved only by the heats of anger, a fever, or a fired musket, and his hunger slacked by a greater pain or a huge fear? This man shall stand in his arms and wounds, pale and faint, weary and watchful; and at night shall have a bullet pulled out of his flesh, and shivers from his bones, and endure his mouth to be sewed up from a violent rent to its own dimensions.’”

He is reported to have been a spectator of the fight at Newbury, when, through the long autumn day, from sunrise until the shadows of twilight fell,

the conflict lasted, ending in the final defeat of the king ; the cause was irretrievably lost. He attempted to cheer the king as the last dark hours came round him; in token of his regard, the king gave him his watch and a few pearls and rubies, which had ornamented the ebony case in which he kept his Bible.

Taylor's memorable retreat into Wales is well known ; his temporary imprisonment there, and his second marriage with Joanna Bridges, a lady to whom he had formed an attachment when with the king in Wales the year before. She is said to have been the daughter of Charles I., and to have presented a striking likeness to the well-known features Vandyke has preserved on the canvas. His wife is supposed to have possessed considerable property in Llangadock, a small town in the north-east part of Carmarthenshire. The name of her estate was Mandinnam, and the loveliness of the scenery around must have been very soothing and inspiring to the heart of the young man, already tolerably bruised and broken, in his worldly conflicts and circumstances. It is probable, however, that the estate and wealth of his wife were greatly reduced by the exactions inevitable to those troubled times. Her husband would not otherwise have condescended, from his royal and courtly companionships, to the toil of keeping a village school. With him in the work, however, were associated two other men, as his assistants, who became Church dignitaries: William Nicholson, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, and William Wyatt, afterwards a prebendary of Lincoln.

Llanfihangel Aberbythych seems to have been the village in which Taylor exercised his educational gifts ; here, in poverty and tribulation, without books or leisure, he received considerable kindness from Lord Hatton ; and here he wrote, and to him dedicated, the work with which his name is most indissolubly associated, his celebrated "Plea for the Liberty of Prophesying."

In his dedication of this work to his friend, Lord Hatton, he says :—

" **MY LORD**,—In this great storm which hath dashed the vessel of the church all in pieces, I have been cast upon the coast of Wales, and in a little boat thought to have enjoyed that rest and quietness which in England, in a greater, I could not hope for. Here I cast anchor, and thinking to ride safely, the storm followed me with so impetuous violence, that it broke a cable, and I lost my anchor ; and here again I was exposed to the mercy of the sea, and the gentleness of an element that could neither distinguish things nor persons. And but that He who stilleth the raging of the sea, and the noise of His waves, and the madness of His people, had provided a plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study. But I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy."

It is an honourable thing to the English Church that such a voice should have risen from her heart, —pity that it came not in a period of prosperity. We fear there is some reason to think that Taylor was somewhat ashamed of his noblest work in later days, when the sun came again from behind the clouds. Bishop Heber labours to set aside this suspicion, first distinctly expressed, we believe, by

Mr. Orme in his life of Baxter ; but we have traced some hints that, " finding, after he became Bishop of Dromore, a very improper use had been made of his famous book, he sent his chaplain over from Ireland to buy up all the copies he could find, and having brought them to Dromore, the Bishop set a day apart for fasting and praying, and then in the evening caused a fire to be made in his courtyard, and burned these books." We are indebted for this suspicion to that eminent and excellent scholar, Dr. Lort.*

To turn to more agreeable impressions, however, Taylor, at Golden Grove, has been frequently a favourite object of pleasant thought. The scenery around him was, what it still is, of the most glorious description—streams, trees, and ruined castles, oaks of a long antiquity, pastoral and baronial life. He was in the midst of scenery, which Dyer—one of the greatest of our almost forgotten poets, and a native of the scenes he so beautifully describes, where he was born not very long after Taylor's residence—has sketched with so charming a pencil :—

" Now, I gain the mountain's brow,
What a landskip lies below !
No clouds, no vapours intervene,
But the gay, the open scene
Does the face of nature show,
In all the hues of heaven's bow !
And, swelling to embrace the light,
Spreads around beneath the sight.
Old castles on the cliffs arise,
Proudly towering in the skies !

* Nicholl's "Literary History," vol. vii.

Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires !
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads !
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks !
Below me trees unnumber'd rise,
Beautiful in various dyes :
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,
The yellow beech, the sable yew,
The slender fir, that taper grows,
The sturdy oak, with broad-spread boughs ;
And, beyond the purple grove,
Haunt of Phyllis, queen of love !
Gaudy as the op'ning dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn,
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charn's the wandering eye !
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are cloth'd with waving wood,
And ancient towers crown his brow,
That cast an awful look below ;
Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,
And with her arms from falling keeps ;
So both a safety from the wind
In mutual dependence find."

Surely, a scene more in harmony with his richly imaginative mind, ever seeking natural suggestions, the poet-preacher could not have found, nor can the reader conceive. The trials of Taylor were no doubt many, but his exile and seclusion suggest the recollection of one, who transcended him in the sense, vehemence, and magnificence of his prose. John Milton, when dangers compassed him around, found a retreat in a poor cottage, in Wilderness Row, in Aldersgate Street, with no courtly patrons, and the sense of sight shut up from all possibility of familiar-

ity with sweet scenes. Spite of the adversities strewn so plentifully around him, it may be believed that the years Taylor spent at Golden Grove were among the happiest of his life ; his writings of that period abound in divine pastorals ; beautiful idyllic pictures, which a painter has only to transfer to the canvas to find how Claude-like they are. Many pages and passages of his discourses have all the rich rural beauty of “ *Il Penseroso* ” and “ *L’Allegro*. ” So he passed his life of contemplation, his genius expanding into full beauty and flower.

At Golden Grove he composed his “ *Holy Living and Dying*,” and his “ *Life of Christ* ;” and in its village church, or in the parlour of Lord Carbery, he preached those remarkable discourses, which, in their own line, are worthy of a place by the side of the greatest masters of sacred eloquence. For thousands of people, for crowded churches in large cities, these sermons seem quite unfitted, and, as preached in a country church in an ignorant age, their overflowing, redundant, frequently most curious scholarship, their refined depth of feeling, their overburdened foliage of imagination—all seem to charge them with affectation, when we think of them as preached to a congregation of rustics ; but it must be remembered these formed but an inconsiderable number of his audience, and, while for these there was much that was more pertinent and practical, he had round about him as pleasant a band of affectionate and cultivated auditors as ever claimed and cheered the heart of a preacher. It may be imagined that to the then remote seclusion of Llanfihangel Aberbythych, and its church of Golden

Grove, many a fainting royalist or outcast cavalier would find his way. The castle of the noble owner seems to have been open to such ; and, however frequently uncongenial with the roystering spirit of the general cavalier army Taylor's divine contemplations might be, there can be no doubt that to most of those who found a shelter in Lord Carbery's mansion they would breathe a sustaining and soothing influence. Through all those sermons, in spite of the interminable quotations from Latin and Greek authors, from Jewish Talmuds and Spanish proverbs, and every kind of rare and admirable learning, there flows a sustained yet pensive volume of meditative power. It seems that it must be every way impossible to preach such sermons as those of the Golden Grove nowadays ; the sentences so long and stately, and these again, like rivulets to some large river, pouring into the copious and protracted paragraph. Keble has instituted a comparison between the sentences of Burke and Taylor, giving to the statesman the palm of the rhetorician, to the preacher the palm of the poet, and, in the main, the distinction is no doubt a very correct one. But Taylor's imagery very frequently flows out into as rich a rhetoric as Burke's, while the orator of the pulpit and of the parliament are alike in this, that, frequently, by the ample foliage of illustration, they do conceal the main stem and topic of discourse. But by remarks like these we anticipate those we intended to reserve for some later page of our chapter. Only, we may say that, some years since, in the spirit of the shrine-lover, we made a pilgrimage to Golden Grove in search of memories of Taylor, but

we found a new little church on the spot ; inquiring for Taylor's pulpit, we found it had been burned as firewood ; and tracing our way down to the avenue which had been known as Taylor's walk, we found the plough had passed over, and obliterated all traces of it.

In 1650, Taylor lost his gentle and accomplished friend, the Countess of Carbery. Shortly after, Golden Grove was besieged by Cromwell with a troop of horse. The earl, whom Cromwell had intended to capture, escaped to a farmhouse amongst the hills, and soon we hear of Jeremy Taylor in prison again. His imprisonment, however, seems in some way to have made John Evelyn acquainted with him,—Evelyn, that beautiful type of all that we conceive in the gentleman of the old school, adorned by the graces of courtliness, and the fulness of scholarship, the wisdom of travel, and acquaintance with mankind. Between Evelyn and Taylor an intimacy began, and continued through the years of Taylor's adversity ; not broken, however, in the years of prosperity, though rendered less marked by the active duties and distant residence of the bishop. Say's Court, at Deptford, the beautiful home of Evelyn, was the frequent haunt of the more truly illustrious men of the time. We first meet Taylor there, with Wilkins, Berkeley, and Boyle. The journal of John Evelyn presents to us not only many letters, exhibiting the mutual estimation of the friends, but records frequent occasions on which Evelyn listened with pleasure to the ministrations of Taylor ; those ministrations evidently were of a comparatively private character. Evelyn appears

to have settled upon his friend some small annuity placing him above want, which, like an armed man, had seized him, until the favourable days for his party came round again.

Not that he continued altogether in London ; we find him in Wales, but there again only in a sorrowful home. If political invaders had passed away, a still more relentless one had entered. He writes to Evelyn, "We are in some little disorder by reason of the death of a little child—a little boy that lately made us very glad—but now rejoices in his little orb, while we think, and sigh, and long to be as safe as he is." And not long after, two other children were taken from him ; and we have another tender and mournful letter ; mournful and tender, as in his own case, accents of the sweetest pathos he addressed in a letter shortly after to Evelyn, when he, in turn, was called to sorrow over a second son, of whom Taylor speaks as "that pretty person, your strangely hopeful boy." The intercourse between these two in these matters is as pathetic as anything we know in our literature ; poor Evelyn's heart breaks out in one of the tenderest ejaculations of grief as he tells how he had coffined the little boy in lead, and temporarily placed it in Deptford church—it must have been the Church of Old St. Nicholas—till it should be removed with his own body to his family resting-place—"When I lay my bones, and mingle my dust with my fathers', if God be gracious to me and make me as fit for Him as this blessed child was ; here ends the joy of my life." From this grief his friend strove to wake him, calling on him to consider "that of the bravest men in the world

we find in seldomest stories of their children, and the apostles had none, and thousands of the worthiest persons that sound most in story died childless ; you will find it as a rare act of Providence so to impose upon worthy men a necessity of perpetuating their names by worthy actions and discourses, governments and reasonings." And these little glimpses of fathers' hearts in those tough times are very beautiful and pleasant ; fathers, it is to be supposed, were very much the same human affairs then as now, and little things with prescient little ways, and little waxen fingers brought high-born gentlemen and stately talkers down to their humanity. Poor Taylor, in a later period of his life, when a member of the Privy Council, high in favour at court, with a mitre on his head, and the power of commanding much for his sons, no doubt thought of them with a rent heart and tearful eyes, and wished that each had found an infant's grave in the church-yard of Uppingham, or amidst the woods of Golden Grove.

Taylor's life was that of a wanderer ; we find him next occupying the post of weekly lecturer or preacher to a small congregation of loyalists in the half-ruined church of Kilulta, near Lisburn, in Ireland. Bishop Heber gives a glowing description of this new home, situated on the borders of the great Lough Neagh, with its romantic islets, to some of which, it was said, he was wont to retire to indulge his characteristic contemplations, and, amidst their repose and beauty, to revolve the casuistries of his great work, the "Ductor Dubitantium." In his letters to Say's Court, he speaks with gratitude and

affection of his retirement, blessing the Providence which had permitted him so pleasant a retreat. The thing from which he seems to have suffered most, in so distant an isolation, was the scholar's perpetual anxiety. "What good books are lately published?" says he. "What learned men abroad, and at home, begin anew to fill the mouth of fame in the places of the dead Salmasius, Vossius, Mocelin, Sismond, Rigaltius, Descartes, Galileo, Peiresk, Petavius, and the excellent persons of yesterday?"

It is not necessary here to dwell upon the circumstances of the Restoration; it came, and, as was natural, it brought a change in the domestic circumstances of Jeremy Taylor; faithful to the principles of the monarchy, honoured with the friendship of Charles I., having been a severe sufferer for his principles, it might have been supposed that one whose genius, too, was of the most brilliant order, and his piety and purity equal to his genius, would have found promotion to a diocese in his own country; but it is probable that Charles II. had too much delight in the wit of Buckingham, Etheridge, and Sedley, to desire the presence in his immediate neighbourhood of a man like Taylor; and if he were aware, as is most probable, of his connection with him by the marriage with his natural sister, he might dread the pretext for a familiarity in the rebuke of his vices, which, perhaps, Taylor might not be indisposed to use, however Charles might be indisposed to listen; he was, therefore, raised to the dignity and office of Bishop of Down and Connor, to which was added that of Dromore. The wealth of his wife, we may suppose, returned to them, since we read not

merely of exalted position, but of extensive and munificent benevolences. It is pleasant to think that he who wrote the "Holy Living" in the dark hours of his adversity, attempted to realize his ideal in his days of prosperity. "The way to judge of religion," he says, "is by doing of our duty, and theology is rather a Divine life than Divine knowledge." Whether the sentence might not have been more true had he substituted the word *piety* or *religion* for *theology*, we will not dispute; it is enough for us that he sought to fulfil in his own life his axiom.

Before he went his way through the house of mourning to the grave, which came about, as we should say, rather prematurely, his household was relieved by what seems to us, after so sombre a life, some humorous touches. The household of Jeremy Taylor has a reputation, like that of the Wesley family, in the history of ghosts; and Glanvill, in his "Sadducismus Triumphatus," has introduced a pair of stories which Heber has thought fit to tell in his life. They are not, however, very pertinent to the purpose of our present pages. His chequered and stormy life came to a close in August, 1667, at the comparatively early age of fifty-five; his body was interred in the choir of the church of Dromore, and no one can be surprised at the affectionate indignation with which Bishop Heber mentions the disturbing of his bones a century afterwards, with those of his friend Bishop Rust, to make room for another bishop. If ever dust were sacred, it might be supposed that character would have attached to the dust of Jeremy Taylor. For a long time no memorial marked the place of his remains. Bishop

Mant and his clergy erected appropriately a white marble tablet in the cathedral church of Lisburn ; a rich mausoleum would have been altogether out of keeping with his dust who, among his last written words, said, " Nor do I desire a stately sepulchre, a beautiful urn, or that my name and actions should be engraven in marble." He had many children, several of whom were sons, but he left his name to no successor ; he, who, with such a prescient tenderness, had expressed the pathos of his soul in congratulations to parents on the early deaths of their offspring, who had taught parents to pray, in his beautiful prayers appended to " *Holy Living*," that their " children may never live vicious lives nor die violent, nor untimely deaths," lived to hear of the death of his own son, an officer in the army, in a duel with an officer of the same regiment ; his only surviving son, destined for the service of the Church, and educated by his father with that view, turned aside to the wild dissipations of Charles's court ; from dissipation he sunk into consumption, and died just before his father, who, however, did not live to hear of the extinction of the family name.

JEREMY TAYLOR is a name so well known, and his writings are so universal a furniture of the library shelf, that it may seem idle to remark upon his genius, excepting that, from year to year, we do need to renew and to revise our criticisms upon, and our admiration of those men, who stand like the tall cedars on the Lebanon mountains of poetry and thought. Taylor's writings have been described as the productions of a vast, undisciplined genius ; they have been likened to the fantastic architecture

of his times, the age of vast chambers, huge oriel windows, spacious fireplaces, and quaint, weird, and uncouth devices, and, in short, of a thousand shapelinesses rising into an imposing and charming shapeliness. It seems very certain that he was pre-eminently a poet amongst preachers. This apology and allowance must be made for him, that no other pulpit name is associated with so rich and rare a poetic exuberance. The epithet of the modern, or the English Chrysostom seems scarcely a fitting one ; Chrysostom was essentially an orator. We do not think of Jeremy Taylor as an orator. We have already said, we cannot conceive those sermons preached to vast audiences ; he who cannot preach to vast audiences is no orator ; he may be a most delightful preacher with the audience fit and few, and the charm of cryptic thought and feeling ; and this is the attraction and the pleasure of the devotions and contemplations of Jeremy Taylor. South, who satirized his artificiality, had a million-fold his art ; he was a great master of clap-trap, and had no objection to pulpit slang. Taylor had artifices, but he was innocent of them ; they belonged to the mannerism of his own mind ; he unconsciously yielded himself to them, for they were charming to him ; he never thought of whistling that the multitude might be captivated and surprised. If we could make a poet by mingling the genius of Spenser and George Herbert, and if we could beat that genius out into prose instead of verse, some such a being as Jeremy Taylor, we think, would be the result. He had much of the spiritual quaintness of the latter, but it was associated

with the long-drawn poetic allegorizing of the former. Yet, without a doubt, his learning sometimes becomes intolerable ; he crowds allusion upon allusion till sometimes the purpose of the allusion is lost in the curiosity of the quotation. Here is an instance from the "Holy Living and Dying" :—

"Let no man appropriate to his own use what God by a special mercy, or the republic, hath made common ; for that is both against justice and charity too. And by miraculous accidents God hath declared His displeasure against such enclosure : when the *kings of Naples enclosed the gardens of Cenotria where the best manna of Calabria descends*, that no man might gather it without paying tribute, the manna ceased till the tribute was taken off, and then it came again ; and so when after the third trial the princes found they could not have that in proper which God made to be common, they left it as free as God gave it. *The like happened in Epirus ; when Lysimachus laid an impost upon the Tragasean salt, it vanished, till Lysimachus left it public.* And when the *procurators of King Antigonus imposed a rate upon the sick people that came to Edepsum to drink the waters which were lately sprung, and were very healthful, instantly the waters dried up, and the hope of gain perished.*"

This is an illustration, but it is by no means an exceptional one, and we can well conceive how common sense would start from her propriety if, in modern days, Lysimachus and Tragasean salt, and King Antigonus and Edepsum, Naples, Cenotria, and Calabria were all laid under contribution to teach so simple a lesson. If in a glance our readers would see what a vast repository the man's mind was, let him turn to the first volume of Heber's edition of his works, and run his eye over the index

of matters touched upon in the volumes ; they remind us of that vast receptacle of curious learning in our times, "The Doctor;" like some huge Oriental pile, the tapestry and drapery of every Tyrian workmanship and hue, barbaric pearl and gold, gums and spices, forests of Lebanon, the honey of Hymettus, the grapes and fountains of Parnassus and Siloa, Celtic uncouthness and Horatian elegance, legends from nunneries and traditions from hoary empires,—all meet together. The objection, perhaps, would be that their individuality remains too strongly marked. Looking over the pages of Taylor, it seems to us as though the rags and fag ends of his learning would, in our day, make a prodigious scholar ; true, his style was not the English undefiled, and critics have remarked that the compilers of an English dictionary would find rich materials in Taylor's words, like "*immorigerous*," "*compaginations*," "*castifications*," "*conspersions*," "*fontanel*," although he did not employ them with pedantic intent.

We have said these books remind us of that strange, fantastic, nondescript of architecture, the Elizabethan style : Taylor lived as the age which gloried in it was ceasing and expiring. The chief characteristic of Taylor, however, is his charming use of natural imagery ; the characteristic we have already pointed out, had it existed alone, would have only won for him a reputation for huge and vast uncouthness. It must be admitted that he frequently permits his learning to trip him up. We have little doubt that Heber was right in supposing that many of these apt quotations from Greeks and Latins found their way first into the manuscript as it was

preparing for the press. He had a most cunning eye for the perception of the most beautiful individualities of nature, and for the relation of them to moral and spiritual analogies. Satire sometimes, and frequently, seems to peep from his sentences, and to say, "I could ;" but he was essentially a humorist, not in the sense in which old Fuller was a humorist, but grave and serious ; a humorist stopped, half-way upon his road to laughter, by the tender and the pitiful, compelling him rather to a tear.

We must present a few of these illustrations, although so well known, in which the poet charms so distinctly, and the contemplative observer of nature looks behind the imagery for the true beauty and spiritual meaning ; it may be well objected that for the pulpit the image is, however beautiful, far too diffuse and protracted. Some critics have denied the claim of Taylor's style to be regarded as musical, but it seems to us to have a true rhythmic flow, flute-like rather than deep and organ-like. It is strange that he had no taste for the organ ; yet Mr. Willmott has, with a very natural fancy, supposed it possible that the future poet, Milton, who delighted in the flowing rolling organ-tone, and the future preacher, Taylor, might have lingered together in the solemn twilight of King's College Chapel when the pealing organ poured its strain

"To the full-voiced choir below
In service high, and anthem clear."

Thus he speaks to show how sickness is sanctified by God :—

"For *so I have known* the boisterous north wind pass

through the yielding air, which opened its bosom, and appeased its violence by entertaining it with easy compliance in all the regions of its reception: but when the same breath of heaven hath been checked with the stiffness of a tower, or the united strength of a wood, it grew mighty and dwelt there, and made the highest branches stoop, and make a smooth path for it on the top of all its glories. So is sickness, and so is the grace of God."

Again, in the progress of the soul towards God in prayer:—

" *For so have I seen* a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and unconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of its wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man; when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity, his duty met with infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument, and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent, and raised a tempest, and overruled the man; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his

spirit is becalmed, made even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy Dove, and dwells with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, loaden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.”

The following is one of those passages especially condemned as full of those vices which South maliciously satirized :—

“Neither must we think that the life of a man begins when he can feed himself, or walk alone, when he can fight, or beget his like; for so he is contemporary with a camel or a cow; *but he is first a man when he comes to a certain, steady use of reason, according to his proportion; and when that is, all the world of men cannot tell precisely.* Some are called at age at fourteen: some at one-and-twenty; some, never; but all men, late enough; for the life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls upon the lark to matins, and by-and-by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brows of Moses when he was forced to wear a veil because himself had seen the face of God; and still while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly: so is a man’s reason and his life.”

And yet once more the following description of the effects of conscience in its awakening new sensibilities :—

“A man is sometimes so impressed with the false fires

and glarings of temptation, that he cannot see the secret turpitude and deformity; but when the cloud and veil is off, then comes the tormentor from within, then the calamity swells, and conscience increases the trouble, when God sends war, or sickness, or death. It was Saul's case, when he lost that fatal battle in which the ark was taken. He thought he saw the priests of the Lord accusing him before God. And this hath been the old opinion of the world, that in the days of their calamity, wicked persons are accused by those whom they have injured; *then every bush is a wild beast, and every shadow is a ghost, and every glow-worm is a dead man's candle, and every lantern is a spirit.*"

Such passages, selected really as illustrations of what teems on almost every page of our writer, present a sufficiently vivid idea of his style. For popular usefulness it could not be fitted. For delighting, and awakening, and sustaining a cultivated mind it was eminently useful. Take again the following well-known passage on the enforcement of tenderness by nature:—

"If you do but see a maiden carried to her grave a little before her intended marriage, or an infant die before the birth of reason, nature has taught us to pay a tributary tear: alas! your eyes will behold the ruin of many families, which though they sadly have deserved, yet mercy is not delighted with the spectacle; and therefore God places a watery cloud in the eye, that when the light of heaven shines upon it, it may produce a rainbow to be a sacrament and a memorial that God and the sons of God do not love to see a man perish. God never rejoices in the death of him that dies; and we also esteem it indecent to have music at a funeral. And as religion teaches us to pity a condemned criminal, so mercy intercedes for the most benign interpretation of the laws. You must indeed be as just as the laws,

and you must be as merciful as your religion: and you have no way to tie these together, but to follow the pattern in the Mount; do as God does, who 'in judgment remembers mercy.'

Again, on the growth of lukewarmness in religion :—

" However it be very easy to have our thoughts wander, yet it is our indifferency and lukewarmness that makes it so natural: and you may observe it, that as long as the light shines bright, and the fires of devotion and desires flame out, so long the mind of man stands close to the altar, and waits upon the sacrifice; but as the fires die, and desires decay, so the mind steals away and walks abroad to see the little images of beauty and pleasure, which it beholds in the falling stars and little glow-worms of the world. The river that runs slow and creeps by the banks, and begs leave of every turf to let it pass, is drawn into little hollownesses, and spends itself in small portions, and dies with diversion; but when it runs with vigorousness and a full stream, and breaks down every obstacle, making it even as its own brow, it stays not to be tempted with little avocations, and to creep into holes, but runs into the sea through full and useful channels; so is a man's prayer, if it move upon the feet of an abated appetite, it wanders into the society of every trifling accident, and stays at the corners of the fancy, and talks with every object it meets, and cannot arrive at heaven; but when it is carried upon the wings of passion and strong desires, a swift motion and a hungry appetite, it passes on through all the intermedial region of clouds, and stays not till it dwells at the foot of the throne, where mercy sits, and thence sends holy showers of refreshment. I deny not but some little drops will turn aside, and fall from the full channel by the weakness of the banks and hollowness of the passage; but

the main course is still continued ; and although the most earnest and devout persons feel and complain of some looseness of spirit, and unfixed attentions, yet their love and their desire secure the main portions, and make the prayer to be strong, fervent, and effectual."

Taylor has not been usually regarded as a sound divine ; his mind, we have said, was undisciplined in its magnificence. Bodies of theology have been constructed from the "Paradise Lost" of Milton ; from the "Divina Commedia," of Dante, and with as much wisdom might Jeremy Taylor be called upon for a system of theology. The performance of such a work was not his gift. He had a great and lovely mind ; but it was no doubt perverted by treading in the footsteps of Laud. Coleridge went too far, when he said, "I believe Taylor was, perhaps unconsciously, half a Socinian in heart" ; the cross of Christ may be too dimly seen in Taylor's works ; yet the following magnificent passage—and there is an abundance of such passages—does not favour such a notion as this :—

"He entered into the world with all the circumstances of poverty. He had a star to illustrate His birth ; but a stable for His bedchamber, and a manger for His cradle. The angels sang hymns when He was born ; but He was cold and cried, uneasy and unprovided. He lived long in the trade of a carpenter ; He, by whom God made the world, had in His first years the business of a mean and ignoble trade. He did good wherever He went ; and, almost, wherever He went, was abused. He deserved heaven for His obedience, but found a cross in His way thither : and if ever any man had reason to expect fair usages from God, and to be dandled in the lap of ease,

softness, and a prosperous fortune, He it was only that could deserve that, or any thing that can be good; but after He had chosen to live a life of virtue, of poverty, and labour, He entered into a state of death, whose shame and trouble were great enough to pay for the sins of the whole world. And I shall choose to express this mystery in the words of scripture. He died not by a single, or a sudden death, but He was the 'Lamb slain from the beginning of the world:' for He was massacred in Abel, saith St. Paulinus; He was tossed upon the waves of the sea in the person of Noah; it was He that went out of His country, when Abraham was called from Charran and wandered from His native soil; He was offered up in Isaac, persecuted in Jacob, betrayed in Joseph, blinded in Samson, affronted in Moses, sawed in Esai, cast into the dungeon with Jeremy: for all these were types of Christ's suffering. And then His passion continued even after His resurrection. For it is He Who suffers in all His members; it is He that 'endures the contradiction of all sinners;' it is He that is 'the Lord of life,' and is 'crucified again, and put to open shame' in all the sufferings of His servants, and sins of rebels, and defiances of apostates and renegadoes, and violence of tyrants, and injustice of usurpers, and the persecutions of His church. It is He that is stoned in St. Stephen, flayed in the person of St. Bartholomew; He was roasted upon St. Laurence his gridiron, exposed to lions in St. Ignatius, burned in St. Polycarp, frozen in the lake where stood forty martyrs of Cappadocia. *Unigenitus enim Dei ad peragendum mortis suæ sacramentum consummavit omne genus humanarum passionum*, said St. Hilary; 'the sacrament of Christ's death is not to be accomplished but by suffering all the sorrows of humanity.'"

But Taylor's theology, it must be admitted, is without symmetry; it is not a noble building; a

very large portion of his writings reads like the essays and confessions of Montaigne, expressed in most dazzling and ambitious language. His most religious writings are what we have called them, Divine contemplations ; thought, in the more strict comprehension of the term, we have little or none ; imagination and emotion we have in abundance. After a time we find the understanding is not firm beneath us, and we begin to perceive that if we demand from our author argumentative coherence, we shall deal unjustly with him, while we cut ourselves off from the possession of much pleasure. We learn that his gift is to teach us rather as a seer than as a philosopher ; to lift us at once to the spiritual rather than debate with us the material reasons of things. When he attempts the latter we become angry with him ; always, when he attempts the former, it is as if at his touch the tabernacle of the testimony is opened in heaven.

Mr. Willmott places the “Ductor Dubitantium,” certainly his largest work, by the side of the “Paradise Lost,” but few readers will agree with him ; that work is an interesting monument to Taylor’s fame ; but other works far exceed it in interest and importance. We find it difficult in these days to enter into the spirit of so elaborate a piece of casuistry ; doubts are as plentiful now as then, but they are of another character and quality. It belongs to those days and those minds in which the Confessional is a perpetually recurring difficulty, when the soul walks in the leading-strings of opinion, and trembles beneath the beck of the priesthood. It is a great work, not only in bulk,

but in learning, in suggestion, and in piety. It is now, no doubt, far too much a neglected work ; it abounds with the rare felicities of Taylor, but we suppose no one would exchange it for the "Holy Living and Dying," or the "Life of Christ," or the "Liberty of Prophesying." The world cares little now for the settlement of such questions in that way ; few go to ecclesiastical courts to settle cases of conscience ; the Church is not now beheld through gratings and cloistered walls ; it is more free, and yet it is more painful ; it is less vicarious, and more personal. Whether consciences are ever tortured now as they were in those times, may be doubted ; perhaps they are not less sensitive, but more healthy. A soul covered with doubts is like a body covered with ulcers, and such a state as that to which Taylor speaks is as morbid as a dissecting-room. We order things differently in Church relations now. And yet for that very reason, it may be, such a book can never be popular, nor is it desirable that it should become popular ; it may be very necessary that it should be read by men who have to deal with consciences ; particular light it may not indeed give ; but, as on the best and strongest mind systems of mental and moral science do not remain as systems, but tend to enlarge the mind, to furnish it with ideas, and to present it with aspects of interior things, so the work of Taylor, and similar works, conduct the reader into the soul's dissecting-room ; accustoms the mind to dangerous questions and subterfuges ; to the subtleties and temptations alike of scrupulous and unscrupulous spirits. The reader will very frequently regret the prolonged

discussion, the long sinuous course of involved remark, the indirectness of the allusion ; but then he will also congratulate himself on the accumulation of amazing wealth by the way. Learning is lavished with quite as much, or even more prodigality than in the other volumes, and on the whole, the work may be regarded rather as a curiosity of literature, illustrating the ancient method of dealing with spiritual things ; like an old fossil, also, not only revealing the ancient method, but guiding the mind to many of the most interesting questions connected with life in general ; but few people read fossils, and he must be really interested who disturbs the “Ductor Dubitantum” from its dusty shelves.

But it was in the same spirit Jeremy Taylor discussed other subjects. He entered into all with the mind of the casuist, he had much in common with those theologians who lay bare the muscles, who tear off the moral skin, that they may observe more clearly. There are few persons who would discuss the Liberty of Speech nowadays from the same point of view as our author. The world has, we fancy, gained something since his day ; there are some noble things said in its pages, but it is sorrowful to think that they should ever have been regarded as noble human truths, axioms innate to our moral conscience and consciousness. The world has left behind it, as first principles, doctrines which savoured of heresy in that age,—the thoughtful world, the world that rules opinion ; there is, however, another world, a world of imbecile ignorance, a world lagging in the rear of things, which does not even yet keep up with the “Liberty of Prophesying.” It

still remains, like the *Areopagitica*, a monument of the thought and the majesty of our language ; it is so honourable to human nature, that it is to be hoped that it was the result, not of the author's exile, and his Church's sorrows, but of his convictions and his hopes ; and certainly there is nothing in it to reprove ; its tender and gentle spirit excites our affectionate admiration ; let us hope the report of the author's penitence is founded in mistake !

CHAPTER VI.

BUT WHAT IS ELOQUENCE?

DO you know the story of the clock of Ezerborn? You will find it in Mr. Curzon's most pleasant "Travels in Armenia." The clock of Ezerborn fell out of repair, and would by no persuasion give forth any knowledge of the state of the time; it occupied the place of importance in the tower or citadel, and although there did occasionally appear in the city a watch or a chronometer, this tower clock was looked upon as the father of the watches, and all the clocks whatever that could make their appearance in the city. But, unfortunately, it came to a stand, and there seemed no possibility of repairing the misfortune. And what a misfortune even for those barbarous people to find time's finger standing still and refusing to strike the old bell! But of all the people who were perplexed, no one was so much perplexed as the Pasha, and he was the more confounded because it did not seem to him so difficult a matter as it really was to set the works of the clock to rights and its finger hand moving with some degree of accuracy. To him it seemed that the man who had mastered any other art might also be perfectly master of the art of clock-making. How could a man be master of any other trade and yet

know nothing of watches or clocks ? It might be a tailor ; then said the Pasha, " Take him to the Tower and let him mend the clock !" The tailor remonstrated that his duties were sartorial and not horological. " What ?" the Pasha would say. " Dost thou pretend to make vestments for men's bodies, and art thou ignorant of clocks ? Thou dog ! Away with him to the Tower, and if he cannot restore the clock to health, away with him to prison." Or it might be a doctor, whose case was worse still. " Dog of a Frank, dost thou profess to expel evil demons from the bowels of mankind, and dost thou not know how to do so with a clock ? Dost thou send down our throats diabolical pills, and canst thou not administer to the disorganized constitution of a clock ? Hath not a clock a pulse when he is alive and in good health ? Go then and see, and cure the clock. Go, guards, and take him to the Tower, and if he cannot cure the clock, thrust him into prison !" This seems to us very funny. The story is really a parable, illustrative of the ignorance of those to whom the religion of mankind is only an old clock which every hand can touch, and for which every ignorant and inexperienced tailor and cobbler has some specific and remedy. Only the difficulty increases in this case, because, instead of any hesitancy, the most ignorant and thoughtless are frequently among the very first to attempt, with their vile nostrums and preposterous specifics, to rectify the hands of the great clock of the universe, or the subtle machinery of the human soul.

And some such ideas have apparently held concerning preaching. Everybody can preach ! Sermons

are generally regarded as uninteresting reading. What immense piles of them, what continents of volumes of them, line the shelves of the book-sellers' stores, and even the libraries of readers ; and from many of them pleasant, and even interesting selections may be made, but they are not *the pulpit* ; the interest has very nearly vanished, even though they be associated with great names ; the interest does not so much attach to those volumes—the interest hangs round the man. That is true of most published sermons, even of very eminent preachers, which the poet Wordsworth once remarked to us, in the little back parlour at Rydal Mount, when, after a cup of tea, we took down from the shelf a volume of the works of Samuel Johnson. "Ah," said the poet, "the time has come when people read the works of Johnson as a commentary on, or because they are interested in Boswell's life of him !" It is so with the sermons of the great dead preachers ; even sermons preached by men in churches or buildings which were thronged to hear them hours before the preacher went into the pulpit do not interest us much. We do not associate the pulpit with the volume ; when the man was in it it was a throne !

We are, of course, speaking of the great pulpit masters ; and their printed volumes are little more than the dead wood of that platform from whence the man threw forth his words of power, but which is now mere wood and nothing more. And yet let us not be unjust ; for ourselves a very large multitude of volumes of sermons are among the most delightful, entertaining, and instructive pieces of reading. Perhaps they are not the productions of

preachers who were of the order of sensational orators, and whose churches or chapels were always thronged by expectant crowds ; published sermons by any eminent preachers may yet receive, without any abatement of respect, the characterization we have just given ; others, again, are to us delightful pieces of reading ; we would as readily give our hours for entertainment to them, as to Montaigne, to Addison, to Burton's *Anatomy*, to dear old Sir Thomas Browne, or to Emerson. Our pulpit classics are eminently rich in the ornateness of Taylor, the wit of South, the weight of Barrow, the delightful metaphysics of Donne, or the mysticism of John Smith, of Cambridge ; our recent pulpit literature is equally rich. We shall refer at length by-and-by to the extraordinary charm of the sermons of our two great Cardinals, Newman and Manning ; then we have the massive suggestiveness of Mozley, who is far too little known ; the intuitionism of Frederick Robertson, and the nimble, lightning-like brilliancy and scenic wealth of Thomas Lynch ; but there are multitudes beside. Our library shelves bend glances upon us from a crowd of witnesses.

But we do no dishonour to, we are guilty of no disparagement of the immense number of faithful and useful men who, as sowers, have gone forth to sow. But preachers are of three orders. First, we have the *Talkers*. We are only speaking of good and useful men—men who are born talkers, to whom it is easy to pour out words, like waves bearing freightage of venerable, useful, and awful truths. Then we have the *Essayists*, men whose power is chiefly in the study, who carefully and conscientiously arrange

their thoughts upon any given subject and array them in a vesture of beautiful and appropriate words, lightening them up by helpful analogies and images. But neither of these represents him of whom we speak as the third man, eminently the *Preacher*, the man of a large soul, and to whom words and thoughts are vehicles of expression, but whose nature is susceptible of a blaze of enthusiasm, which, when he speaks, wraps every soul in it, as in a flame, and bears all before it, as on an irresistible torrent. The old world appears to have had a few men of this order ; the Christian centuries present to us a few of this matchless and marvellous type. Many masterly critics will have it that oratory has none of its most lofty and overwhelming performances outside of the languages of Greece and Rome ; that, in the history of eloquence, its earliest annals tell the story of its most illustrious triumphs, and that now all that can be said is that

“ Our little barks attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale.”

It is affirmed that we have had nothing since approaching the Olynthiacs and Philippics of Demosthenes, through which he lightened, and thundered over, and shook all Greece ; while to others again Cicero still seems, as he seemed to Longinus, the greatest of critics, and to Quintilian the greatest of rhetoricians, the most unrivalled master of matchless eloquence. We listen to the verdict, but we do not believe in it. Preachers of the order we are indicating look almost like supernatural men ; they were literally men who, by the constant burning of a

sacred fire within their souls, by their perpetual residence within the neighbourhood of highest truths, appear to have been prevented from taking any counsel with flesh and blood, or from counting their lives as of much importance in comparison with those lights which they saw perpetually shining from behind the veil, and which they were perpetually attempting to make visible to their hearers.

What is eloquence? Briefly, then, "eloquence is mind in motion"; so says Professor Shedd; and D'Alembert also says, in admirable harmony with this definition, "It is the transfer of the orator's consciousness into the auditor's consciousness"; and, perhaps, this constitutes at once the splendour and the danger of images. It is a very fine art, that of picture-framing; what should we think of the taste of the man, possessed of a Murillo or a Raphael, who cared more for the frame in which he suspended his painting than for the light in which it hung, or for the painting itself? Hence we have known orators so impressed with the grand forms of natural majesty, that text and truth were lost sight of in the wild moor, the vast meadow beneath the shadow of tall overhanging mountains, the silence of the eternal hills, and the still and solemn forests, where the trees stood side by side like brothers, the glossy ivy wreathing the ancient crag, the wild thyme spreading a bed for the weary, the foxglove ringing its beautiful bells, the birch bending to kiss the stream, the mountain ash, and the evergreen banks, the lone kirkyard among the mountains, the solitary shieling, or the far-distant farm, remote from minster spire or city clock. Such scenes, such images, are often near

to a speaker, but in themselves they do not constitute eloquence, unless they form a portion of the very business in the speaker's mind. They are all very pleasing, and they exercise a very palatable charm upon the fancy ; but they may be all diversions of the fancy from the subject in hand rather than assistants to the main topic of discourse ; probably many of the sermons of Dr. Guthrie may have affected readers and hearers in this way.

What is eloquence ? It is the power imparted to words to become motives, to move the soul, and so, in fact, to move to action, even as Horace said, "It is not enough that poems be beautiful ; they must be affecting," and carry the soul of the hearer. Hence an eloquent mind is a mind under motion ; it is the secret of all influence, and a great Roman Catholic prelate well says, in his lectures on preaching, that "to address men well they must be *loved* much" ; and he says again, "We are always eloquent when we wish to save one whom we love ; we are always listened to when we are loved."

What is eloquence ? The power of the pulpit, or, in one word, persuasion. Whatever may be its artillery, whatever its various methods and modes, it reaches its end when it fulfils this ; it falls short of its end when it fails here. Its ample and moving flights of impassioned eloquence, its strong rivers of plated common-sense, its strokes of humour sanctified and toned to high purpose, its "slap-dash" strokes, as Dean Milner characterised the preaching of Rowland Hill,—every image or analogy, judiciously used, has this for its object. Its use of parable and anecdote, its lighter touches of description, its im-

passioned declamation,—*persuasion* should be the end and purpose of all. It has been said to be the firmly linked chain of thought made red-hot with the live fire of emotion.

It has often been remarked, perhaps more frequently than felt, that our Lord's discourses are the models for all preaching. They are so; but their chief element is persuasion—usually how gentle; doctrine distilling like the dew, or coming down like the soft summer rain on the mown grass, in parable, proverb, and story; with a bland and courteous entreaty, although sometimes rising to vehement invective and stern and terrible denunciation. Whether He sit in the midst of the crowd, on the side of the hill or the mountain, or speak to the multitudes on the shore from the deck of the ship, or quietly pour out His stream of words to His friends in the upper room, *persuasion* is the end of all. As to the manner of what He said, it is all an impressive, subduing, and more captivating persuasiveness which arrests us. Socrates was a great talker, a born talker; but one cannot but feel that his first instinct with every man with whom he talked was to quarrel with him, to do exactly what the Pharisees are said to have attempted with our Lord: "to catch him in his words." This was never our Lord's method. Sometimes we find how, when they attempted it, He caught them in their own trap and toil, and moved them so awkwardly that "no man after that durst ask Him any question." But to quarrel was not His way, nor should it be the way of any honest and ingenuous teacher. Faithful and lucid persuasion, all other things being equal, must be the

preacher's highest gift, his surest guarantee of success, and, therefore, should be his highest model. How many ages since Aristotle, that mighty ancient master, said that "to demand demonstration from an orator would be very much like allowing a mathematician to employ persuasion." He means to say that demonstration is the business of the mathematician, persuasion is that of the speaker.

In the history of the pulpit we are all carried away too much by the story of brilliant effects, the dazzling and magnificent displays of genius; but there is another chapter worthy of recitation, the story of "power in weakness." Eternity will tell the stories of men who were not eloquent, as we are wont to understand the term, who were never encouraged by great success; they were not Chrysostoms, or "Golden Mouths"; the bees did not drop honey upon their lips as they lay in the cradle; they were not keen shrewd men of business; they did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause their voice to be heard in the streets; they wrought like miners, buried in obscurity; they wrought in the night; their meekness made it easy to assail them. Yet affectionate hearts heard their words, and treasured them; and, perhaps, no sermon, which contains a word which has been wrought out upon the anvil of thoughtful and painful experience, can ever be altogether lost. It finds an audience somewhere, for it contains that which assuredly tells—affectionateness. Goethe expresses this truth well, and, although the following translation is free, it admirably conveys the poet's meaning, and the truth of all real eloquence:—

“ Persuasion, friend, comes not by toil or art,
Hard study never made the matter clearer ;
'Tis the live fountain in the speaker's heart
Sends forth the streams which melt the ravished hearer !
Then work away for life, heap book on book,
Line upon line, heap precept on example !
The stupid multitude may gaze and look,
And fools may think your stock of wisdom ample,
But all remain unmoved ; to touch the heart,
To make men feel, requires a different art ;
For touching hearts, the only secret known,
My worthy friend, is this, to have one of your own ! ”

Still, after all, what is eloquence ? Think of Demosthenes, and, as there is but one Demosthenes and one Robert Hall, think of Hall ! It is quite certain that Hall was a far greater man than Demosthenes in the order of his mind, in his elevation of sentiment ; and, in his tastes and studies, he much more nearly resembled Cicero, most perfect of pagans and nearest approximation to the Christian philosopher ; but Cicero was much more of a rhetorician than either Demosthenes or Hall, aimed more at producing superficial effect, and appears to have cared more about the posing of the body and retaining an unrumped and uncreased robe. On the other hand, we would not degrade Hall's character to the level of the Billingsgate of Demosthenes. Shakespeare himself could not have been more ready in the manufacture of compound epithets. The abusive Greek deliciously draws out the venomous power—or rather, let us say, the abusive vehemence—of the Attic tongue, calls his adversary “ a wretch,” “ a reviler,” “ a miscreant,” “ a pompous declaimer,” “ the off-

scouring and hack of the courts," "a word-spoiler," "an execrable pedagogue." "Why, you wretch, do you bring your false accusations? Why do you fabricate your lying words? Why do you not purge away your filth?" Plenty of expressions falling from the lips of Hall assure us that he also would, in like circumstances, have been quite equal to the discharging of this verbal tempest of invective. His characterization of a reviewer who was guilty of tergiversation and false quotation reminds us of this: "Like a certain animal, in the eastern part of the world, which is reputed to be extremely fond of climbing a tree for that purpose, he merely pelts the author with his own produce." When, upon his settlement at Cambridge, a gentleman of very questionable opinions said, "Ah, sir, we shall have you among us soon, I see," he replied, "*Me among you, sir! me among you!* Why, if that were ever the case, I should deserve to be tied to the tail of the great red dragon, and whipped round the nethermost regions to all eternity!" In many instances, in conversation in the parlour, we do meet with many hints of the power of a fierce and fiery invective; and, chastened and subdued, it manifests itself in the pulpit in passages, we venture to think, finer than any which meet us in Demosthenes; as, for instance, in that famous passage on modern infidelity:—"Eternal God! on what are thine enemies intent? What are those enterprises of guilt and horror that, for the safety of their performances, require to be enveloped in a darkness which the eye of Heaven must not pierce? Miserable men! proud of being the offspring of chance,

in love with universal disorder, whose happiness is involved in the belief of there being no witness to their designs, and who are at ease only because they suppose themselves inhabitants of a forsaken and fatherless world!"

Again, what is eloquence? One of the great charms of oratory is speed—speed, of course, which combines with dignity, and never suggests the idea of haste or hurry; this has been an astonishing attribute in some men—in Robert Hall, for instance, and in his far inferior contemporaries Robert McAll, and James Parsons—for there is something captivating in motion, in graceful motion; it was said of Mr. Hall's eloquence that his mind, like a vast machine, gradually acquired a velocity which not only called forth every power of his soul into action, but had an irresistible influence upon more remote objects, and touched all the springs of feeling and of action in the bosoms of his hearers; the pathos in the speed created an agitation and tumult in the soul, and images of terror and of sublimity became sudden strokes of power. Oratory is a mystery; it is an inexplicable mystery; again and again we compare it to the necromantic power of great and overwhelming singers, the wealth of expression in the tender tenor, "the loud uplifted trumpet" of the soprano; add the wizardry of voice to the equally subtle combination of mental powers, all in happy harmony, rhythm, and symmetry, and we suppose we may form some conception of the orator, only that to us the most essential part of the orator dies when he dies. We may still retain his words, the

close compacted chain mail of his reasoning, we may still retain the radiancy of imagination and the harmonious melody of expression, but, after all, these are only the chords of a rare and exquisite instrument upon which the fingers can play no more. Thus some minor,—Hall's, for instance,—raced on like an ample, rich, rejoicing river, bearing, in its course, freshness and irrigation.*

Shall we say how contrasted are some of these great masters of eloquence? See one, airy, bland, soft, and prepossessing; see that other, lowering, hard, stern, and almost repulsive.

Of the first, the passions sit as in an imposing *champagne* upon the face, and wave and flicker to and fro with every turn of speech; the passions of the other are within, and while every ear is tingling at what he says, and perhaps the hearer is writhing in agony, his visage retains a cold and brassy hue.

One orator is plump, sleek, and graceful; the other is bony, harsh, and ungainly. We have seen one orator stand up erect as if looking for the applause of others; we have seen another coiled and concentrated, as if satisfied with the power within himself. We have seen, or heard one fighting as if for victory; we have heard another speak as if for the mere glory of the speech.

We have heard one coming forth with illustrations wholly classical, or flaunting all the flowers of the muses, another hurling at his hearers the whole mass of the encyclopædia.

* See these remarks amplified in the life of Robert Hall by Edwin Paxton Hood. Hodder and Stoughton.

We have seen one going forth like a lapidary, picking up gems of great value, and fitting them for diadems ; we have seen another, like a giant, with an iron mace breaking the rocks to pieces, and preparing a path through the most stubborn and untoward ways over which mind might travel.

We have known some orators select words for the smoothness of their flow and the music of their sound ; we have known others who seemed to select words, as the more pleasant to their taste, the longer, more stubborn, and terrible. We have seen some such men in the very tempest of their speech, when it seemed as if the sky lowered and muttered thunder, the naturally stiff form twined as by the proboscis of an elephant, while form and feature were as if darting forth dark fires of retribution ; the storm was on the wing, and

“ Iron sleet and arrowy shower
Hurtled through the darkened air ! ”

Perhaps the great attribute of the highest eloquence is that it throws a spell and an enchantment over the hearer ; as with those subtle gases which reduce us to their power, we are fully conscious, though unconscious of what it is that is mastering us. And this reminds us of a great mistake made by Sir Walter Scott, and it was the keen critical eye of Lord Jeffrey which instantly detected it ; it is in that touching scene in “ *The Heart of Midlothian*,” in which Jeannie Deans appears before the Queen Caroline, to intercede with the sovereign to save her sister’s life. The Queen had charged on Jeannie some knowledge of the Porteous riots ; Jeannie soon, and

quietly disposed of this. "But my sister, my poor sister, she still lives, though her days and her hours are numbered. She still lives, and a word of the King's mouth might restore her to a broken-hearted auld man that never, in his daily and nightly exercise, forgot to pray that his Majesty might be blessed with a long and prosperous reign, and that his throne and the throne of his posterity might be established in righteousness. Oh, madam, save an honest house from dishonour, and an unhappy girl, not eighteen years of age, from an early and dreadful death. Alas! it is not when we sleep soft, and wake merrily ourselves, that we think on other people's sufferings. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are for righting our own wrongs and fighting our own battles. But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body—and seldom may it visit your leddyship—and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours—oh, my leddy, then it isna what we have done for ourselves, but what we have done for others, that we think on most pleasantly." Tears followed tears down Jeannie's cheeks as, her features glowing and quivering with emotion, she pleaded her sister's cause with a pathos which was at once simple and solemn. "This is eloquence," said her Majesty to the Duke of Argyll, who had introduced Jeannie to the Queen. That is the great novelist's mistake. The speech of Jeannie may have been eloquence—we should assuredly say it is eloquence of the very highest order—but Lord Jeffrey very shrewdly remarked that if it were so, that would not have been

her majesty's comment upon it. True eloquence is, perhaps, the very rarest gift possessed by any son or daughter of man, far more rare, we believe, than the art of poetry, or the power of the painter ; it never leaves the impression on the mind that it is *eloquence*. Pure eloquence is not like a mirror in which you see the speaker ; it is like a transparent glass, through which you behold that which he has been attempting, with a perfect, self-abandoned, but chastened consciousness, which has kept him entirely out of the hearer's eye, to describe.

But again, what is eloquence ? "Weight without lustre," said Lord Chesterfield, speaking of eloquence, "is lead" ; but this is not always so. Gold may be as heavy as lead, but it may not have been beaten out into the feathery gold leaf, or drawn out into the glittering or golden wire, the filigree of the jewel, or the easy manipulation of the coin. There is, indeed, plenty of speech which is only leaden, merely heavy, but there is gold in the mine and gold in the mint ; and there are some sermons, very short and compact, with very little glitter, but with a gravity, or a gravamen, which makes them very rememberable. We remember a sermon of old Matthew Wilks' of this order ; all his sermons were of this order, but we take one on the text, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is nothing," etc. After some first words, said he, "I shall take this text as *four stones*. 1. A *loadstone* ; it is the supreme attraction. *Whom* ? 2. A *milestone*, by which a man may test how far he has travelled in his outward religious life. 3. A *touchstone*, by which he tests the state of his inward affections and internal piety.

4. And last, a *grindstone* ; if a man have no such knowledge of God, then he is ground by the cares of a present evil world and by the fears of a coming Judge on earth ! ” Nothing very lustrous, but how *rememberable*.

After all, again, and for the last time, we inquire, What is eloquence ? When we think of it in its relation to the pulpit, Robert Boyle, that great naturalist and philosopher,—now almost a forgotten writer,—in his paper on the sermon and the looking-glass, likens the wit and the fine language in which the sermon is set forth to the frame of the looking-glass, which, although it has no power to reflect the image, may attract the observer to yet more valuable properties than are in itself ; and just as no man will judge of the goodness of a glass by the fineness of the frame, so no wise Christian will judge of a sermon merely by the elegance of its language. The same writer likens the influence of preaching to the fertility which may be imparted by a flowing river, fertility which may be imparted by little and little at a time, and even by unperceived passages. It is a wise remark that it is not always those who remember the most of sermons to whom they do most good, even as water retained in ponds makes not the bottom flourishing, but the banks ; and the efficacy of a sermon is better to be collected from the impression it has on the understanding and the affections, than from what it leaves on the memory. We would attempt to express in these pages our high honour to all pulpit workers who have done their best. Such spiritual energies as those we are describing do not pass away ; they are like lightning

flashes. Does the flash pass? Yes, but its power abides; it has done its work; it has electrified the seed, the sod, and the soil; it has rent the cloud, and compelled it to pour itself in rain; the grasses, the leaves, and the flowers are vernal and lovely because of what the vanished lightning did. Departed men were the instruments in the hand of God to bring about great results; "their works follow them," and now they know that they have not lived in vain.

And yet on platform, or in pulpit, we have no eloquence, as the masters of the art understood it. What we do not experience we find it difficult to believe; those who have never heard eloquence find it difficult to believe that it ever was indeed heard, and it is quite impossible to them to realize or to understand its power. Eloquence, like the highest forms of poetry, can only be felt, or uttered, by the tongue or heart of faith; it is the born child of belief; it is the fountain of fire shooting forth from the furnace of the soul. It may be said that in the present age we do not want it. Certain it is we have not it, nor is it likely that for some time we shall have it. And what do we want with poetry, or song, or sculpture, or painting, or architecture? Is it not a world in which man was sent to buy and to sell, and can he not do this quite as well without the fine arts nay, a great deal better? And, as to those erratic fires of human speech, how dangerous they are, how much better is the world without them than with them, how much more desirable is it to live without the neighbourhood of those passionate impulses and storms, which in ancient

days shook human souls like a tempest to utter, and like a thunder-peal to hear!

Besides, we have now quite outgrown eloquence. There is something very humbling to us in going miles to hear a man talk ; and there is something very humbling in the sensation of his words tingling along the blood ; his eye, his tyrannic eye, fixed upon us, and his words flowing over us, causing the heavy perspiration to stand on our forehead, and his ideas to arrest us with their most uncomfortable vastness, dazzling the eye and bewildering the brain ; his language, his words of arrowy light, leaping along from chamber to chamber of our souls, like lightning flashing on from cliff to cliff, revealing caves and grots, rousing a most unpleasant consciousness, and somehow imparting a quickened action to the blood, a new force to the will, and, in fact, taking up the whole man—nerves, muscles, thoughts, impulses, volitions, actions, and setting him down on quite a different moral platform from that which he occupied before the oration began. Of all *that* we have fortunately rid ourselves. It is quite true that speech gives mighty impulses, but we quite prefer the impulses of common-sense, a nice, quiet, ordinary little routine world, to the impulses and world of eloquence !

Orators are very “uncomfortable cousins.” What tales are told us of their eyes glancing over, and round an assembly—eyes so full of magnetic power, that they have been said to be like lightning and not to be withstood—eyes like the eye of Pougatscheff*

* Turnerelli's *Kazan*, ii. 313.

—so dark and fiery that people fainted beneath its lustre! When we read of such, how fabulous and mythical it all sounds! Orators do not now walk upon the wings of the wind and move aloft through the vast vistas of, to them, a realised ideality. Orators in the old time seemed to have some strange power over the minds of men, because they saw more than others saw, and heard more than others heard; they had unlocked the inscrutable and the ineffable. As we looked at them, we felt that to them were visible waving and rustling robe-folds, hidden from their hearers' eyes; their words were attuned to melodies which had never sounded on mortals' ears. The orator was held to be a man whose whole communings were of a higher order than those of his audience. Neither the poet nor the painter dealt more certainly with invisible forms and spiritual influences than he did. He was frequently out of sight, and men who would see him had to look up, and to look long, to see clearly the pathway by which he travelled. There were times when the orator seemed to shake from his robes an incense and a perfume over his whole audience, when his hearers no more knew the meaning of much that was said than we know of the meaning of the notes that wander from the organ down the thrilled and palpitating aisles of the cathedral; but they felt that the surges and the billows of his eloquence carried them to another world, that earth seemed dark to them when they touched its confines again, that the close of the oration dropped them from the gorgeous pathway of the solar rays to the "valley of the shadow of death." How fortunate it is

for us that we have no troubles of this sort now ! Happy people ! we hear nothing now that we do not understand ! Our teachers speak to the level of our common-sense, and, for *our* benefit, are rather content to lag behind us than to mount before us.

Truly eloquence is fallen into disesteem ! It is regarded as one of the worthless baubles of the infancy of the world. Men would be rather ashamed to acknowledge that any word of any orator, however famous, had affected them at all. We have more good sense than Julius Cæsar : that mighty conqueror was so subdued by the power of Cicero's eloquence, that he changed his purpose, and acquitted a criminal whom he had determined to condemn. We have now eloquence enough left to us to *criticise*, and we have taste enough to enable us to act the part of critics, but we have not eloquence enough left to awe us, to inspire us, to subdue us. The orator on whom we can play the critic is to us no orator : the truest oratory is no more matter for ordinary criticism than fire is a substance for ordinary handling. What you keenly feel, you will be little disposed critically to dissect. A man beneath the influence of some strong passions and affections—borne away on a torrent of love—is little disposed to analyse his emotions ; he recoils from the attempt.

Eloquence achieves nothing while we are able to say, "*This* is eloquence."

"Have I inadvertently let some bad thing slip me ?" said old Phocion when once, in the middle of a speech, he was interrupted by unexpected and unusual applause. It was very worthy in the grim, honest old cynic to say it ; it is the token, however,

of a state of mind in which eloquence is impossible. Abandonment is the necessary condition of eloquence,—perfect abandonment to the subject in hand. Of course, it will be said, such a method is wholly inconsistent with the idea of art and preparation; and it must be said again that the highest state of preparation is prepared *unpreparedness*—heart, mind, language, all well furnished—a perfect knowledge of the subject, a perfect faith, a perfect self-possession, sympathy, and loftiness of aim, and then—then let the wind blow wheresoever it listeth—it shall be given in the same hour what to speak!

We confess whenever we think of the achievements of eloquence we are never tired of contemplating St. Bernard, the last of the Fathers. We confess to the heresy. We would rather have heard the Abbot of Clairvaux than Demosthenes. Above his eloquence there does seem to gather the light and might of another world. Living in such an age, it would indeed be wonderful if all his words and deeds moved in unison with ours; but it is impossible to read either his words or his works and not feel that he possessed in a wonderful degree that commanding eloquence which will not be resisted, which moves before men like a pillar of fire or a pillar of cloud, and which they are therefore constrained to follow. His eloquence was, without a figure of speech, fascination, and his writings abound with every variety of eloquence. A feeble and insignificant man, barons, clad in their glittering and clangling steel, shrank back afraid of his tongue. Wherever his words alighted they fell with soft but

imperative persuasiveness ; they operated like a charm ; they wrought like a spell. How that fierce Duke William of Aquitaine felt them ; that stout glutton, that wild and rugged feudal lord ; cruel, vehement, passionate, whom no man can withstand, who is a thorn in the sides of the Church and of Bernard in the cathedral in which he is worshipping ! Behold the Saint, descending from the steps of the altar with the elements of the Lord's Passion in his hand, approaching the Duke,—excommunicated by the Church as its foe and tyrant ;—he makes his way through the crowd ; he holds before the prince the consecrated bread, his face irradiated with a mingled light of indignation and compassion. “Twice,” says he, “already have the servants of the Lord, in united conference, supplicated you, and you have despised *them*. Lo ! now the Blessed Son of the Virgin, He who is the *Head* and Lord of the Church which you persecute, appears to you ! Behold your Judge, at whose voice every knee is bowed both in heaven and on earth ! the Judge to whom you must one day surrender your soul !—and will you *reject* Him as you have rejected His servants ?” The Duke has fallen to the ground, as if smitten by epilepsy ; he is raised by his soldiers, and falls again beneath those words. He gives the Bishop the kiss of peace ; nor does the effect of that wonderful hour appear to have passed away ; that moment, in that old church, was not only the hour of dread and terror, but of repentance too. Was not this one of the achievements of eloquence ? Wonderful being, St. Bernard ! the great Christian minister of his age ! We like to look at him, rising

out of his time as the central man—high in the midst of the circle of popes, kings, princes, bishops, and heresiarchs ; but if we had the opportunity conferred on us to see him and hear him, we would not choose the moment when, on the sloping hills of Vezelay, before the King and Queen, barons and bishops, he proclaimed the Crusades, while all that mighty multitude rolled high their words, in reply to his, “It is the will of God ! It is the will of God !” Nor would we choose the moment when, in the cathedral church of Sens, before the great Fathers of the Church, and the King Louis VII., he hushed the heresy or the voice of Abelard. Achievements of eloquence these, surely ! But to hear him every day discourse to his children, his brethren of the shades of St. Clairvaux, beneath those embowering flowers and blossoming trees, in that secluded valley, those sweet discourses on the Canticles which are still with us, so full of devotion, of unction, and affection, *that* might almost tempt one to a monastery too. Not the less do we love to linger over that last scene of his life, when he rose in haste from his deathbed to stay the fury of battle between the burghers and barons of Metz ; to the very battle-field he hastened, but found the knights elated with victory, and refusing to listen to him, fearful of being overcome by his eloquence, and he was obliged to retire. “Nevertheless,” said he to his monks, “fear not : the desired peace is at hand, although it may be preceded by many difficulties.” And so, indeed, a message speedily came from the nobles announcing their change of purpose, and the contending parties

came and ended their quarrels by his deathbed. Is the life of Bernard impossible now? Why do not the churches produce it? What! has that well of eloquence dried up—that pure, natural fountain—that unchecked and perennial spring? We need the achievements of eloquence no less now than then, the freedom of over-flowing souls, spontaneous in their passion and their pathos, shooting out over the world bright rays of light from the vast sun of love.

Oh, dear people, we are afraid we have few men of the St. Bernard school in our pulpits. How is it, we wonder? We talk much, but what is the worth of any quantity of talk if it be on stilts?

For, indeed, in real earnestness, we must say human speech is not a power to be despised: and if our age have no power to produce earnest tones of deep and mighty bass pealing through the great nave of ages like those voices of old, and if our age despise that power of eloquent speech, why so much the worse for us! Eloquence is one of the great moving forces of the moral world; it is one of the great levers wherewith God lifts human souls. And, as all art, and all æsthetic taste is ennobled as it becomes sanctified by religion; as the mightiest architecture is Gothic; the mightiest poets, Milton and Dante; the mightiest musicians, Handel and Mozart; the mightiest painter, Raphael; the mightiest sculptor, Michael Angelo; as all art heaves with the inspiration of greatest ideas as it approaches the Holy of Holies, and especially as it approaches Calvary and the Cross: so eloquence is no exception to what indeed is the very law of art. A Christian

Minister ! Well, the work and the task are as glorious as they are wonderful,—the unveiling to the world the most sublime and affecting pictures which can possibly engage human attention. When the Bible and all its subjects are fairly looked at, and it is recollected that the Christian Minister is to be the exponent of the idea of the Book, and of all its wonderful epics of moral sublimity, the coldness, the tameness, and the insipidity of Pulpit exposition are only less marvellous than the subjects the teachers are called to discuss. But surely warm love and earnest faith would create a high order of eloquence anywhere, and on any tongue. Eloquence,—moulded by the character of the possessor of it—in some deep and penetrative, in others sounding and soaring—in any case eloquence. Oh ! if we could speak to ministers and teachers, surely we would say, Have faith in human speech. Human speech, when it flows from an earnest and harmonious spiritual life, is one of the most powerful agents God has sent into the world. It is inferior to no art, for it may embody and comprehend every art ; it is statuary in the body, it is painting on the tongue ; epic, or dramatic, it may hold and embody both, and enchant the passions of entranced auditors equally with music and song. Men possess this august and magnetic power, and affect to despise it ; and use it, without responsibility and preparation, when this power would transfix human hearts like a target, and make human ears tingle and human spirits tremble.

It is amazing how men will underrate the value of oral instruction, and how they will hit on the wrong method, and argue all time and all eternity

out of countenance that it is the right plan. Once for all, it ought to be understood that the man who is a teacher by the tongue is expected to do something with truth, and for truth, that cannot be done by any other form or method.

Our friend, the Rev. Octavian Symphony, constructs all his sermons on the plan of Addison's Essays, very nice little performances. And he goes into his pulpit, and reads his rounded composition, beautifully written in ink made of Attic milk and water, to his congregation, over whom it all falls like the buzzing of noontide bees. Our friend, the Rev. Euclid Birch, laughs heartily at Octavian. "Facts and logic," says he, "these are the staple matters of the spiritual kingdom :" and so he entertains his people with hard dialectic gradgrindings, and fancies he has changed the heart when he has bayoneted an unbeliever into a corner. Meantime, the Rev. Eusebius Polyglott laughs at both his brethren, and says, " How ridiculous is the rhetoric of the one, and the logic of the other!" Eusebius entertains his audience with translations "from the original," and allusions to the Grecian Games, and the "Oriental customs." And we cannot sometimes help laughing at them all. As to elegant essays, we can read them at home,—better essays than Octavian can compose. Logic is very well, but it is very wearisome ; it is expended, as has been said, on killing dead giants. And criticism is very well too, but bad stuff to feed on. We want *a man* who will do for us what books cannot,—mingle rhetoric and logic in one, and turn a criticism into a painting. Books are dead, the roal teacher should be all alive. He is to be neither

a professor of logic nor a professor of belles-lettres. He is to temper, in his teaching, light and fire. He is to recollect, as Demosthenes recollected, that the audience is impatient of chains of reasoning. He must show the result at the end of the links without exhibiting the chain ; and only allow his audience rest, or repose in order to rouse sympathy, sensibility, conscience, admiration, more fully, and show himself a workman needing not to be ashamed.

Plausibility is the curse of the pulpit, as it is the curse of everything it touches ; it is the shibboleth of meanness ; it is the everlasting hymn in the mouth of the moral huckster and Cheap John of the platform ; it is the last outcome of the twopenny-halfpenny faculty. Plausibility is always a sweet refreshing ice to impatient and passionate souls ; it is the logic of rationalism ; it always brushes the bloom from the peach, and holds up a prism to the rainbow ; it never will accept beauty without dissecting it ; it is ever engaged in giving its bald, shallow, reasonless reasons for things ; it has no mystery and no ideal ; it will account for love and faith by the motions of the blood, and finds the Divine wonders of heaven and hell to be only the dizziness of the soul. This is the miserable ghost that has haunted and terrified so many of our modern preachers ! This plausibility, this pleasing everybody, and satisfying everybody,—sublime wish, gratifying altitude, smiled upon by the Trinitarian, patted on the back by the Unitarian ! believed in by the Pantheist, and beloved by the Christian ! Surely this is catholic teaching ; and would not Moses, and Elijah, and Paul, stare at it in Christian men ?

But it must not be forgotten, that not only all men are not fitted to be preachers, but that it must certainly be the case that there will be always many men *in the pulpit* who will not be fitted for preachers to the masses of the people; men whose thoughts and words move heavily, like the tramp of an elephant through a forest; powerful men, invaluable men, but men without any tact, perhaps without any humour, or much sympathy; linguists, logicians, mathematicians, psychologists. John Foster could never have been an *attractive* preacher. It ought to be easy to find for such men an assistant, for they serve the world as well as the lighter and more aërial forces; or perhaps to find them posts in the larger towns, where an audience disposed to appreciate might be secured; or perhaps to appoint them to some dusty library, where their powers of digestion might be satisfied in the dietary of books. It is not desirable to see many such men in the ordinary ministry; for its functions are certainly not those of a curator of a museum, nor a librarian, nor a professor, but a warm, active, sympathising nature, full of energy, intelligence, and sympathy.

In the ancient world no man was thought worthy of a post of distinguished honour, unless he could acquit himself well as a speaker in public. The public speaker absorbed all other qualifications and all other excellences; no work of genius was thought to require such great parts and capacity as the speaking in public. All that is dead now, as dead as a sentiment; the office of speaker commands more attention than the speech, and all the great swelling and heaving sentiments which inflamed the eloquence

of the ancients, now would be regarded only as so much bombast and clap-trap. Those spoken poems, in which the orator laid all nature under contribution and command, while the pinions of his language and imagination dared and dazzled, and every gorgeous image stood forth, in its mighty and vast proportions, dilating over the awed and enraptured assembly: these are things of which we hear in legend and tradition, but they seem to have faded from human knowledge. Nothing can kindle them. We seldom rise beyond the dead level of common sense; our preachers can seldom rise into eloquence, even when near the Cross of Christ.

For ever the same, the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness. Yet of all the achievements of eloquence, is there any like *that* foolishness? *Can* there be any achievement like that which is its one great object? For, whatever may be the object of the hearer of the Word, and whatever may be the object of the preacher of the Word, only one can be really acknowledged as legitimate, the turning of the heart to God; and this is so wonderful that the Scriptural phraseology, “foolishness of preaching,” is literally correct. Amazing that a man should be such a medium, that any human creature should be an agent at all in so stupendous an event! It is amazing that there should be power in man to turn the current of human opinion at all! Amazing to think what has from time to time been the consequence of spoken words! Amazing to think what words have been spoken! The orations of Demosthenes on the Crown; the impeachment of Hastings by Burke and by Sheridan! Very amazing

was the power of the golden-mouthed Chrysostom, who, when he preached in the early church, was greeted with clapping, stamping, shouting, and leaping, the waving of robes, garments, and plumes, and the cry of "Hail! worthy of the priesthood! thirteenth Apostle! Christ hath sent thee!" Very wonderful were the words of the Friar Narni, a Capuchin, so remarkable for his eloquence that his hearers, after a sermon, cried out for mercy in the streets as he passed along to his home; and thirty bishops, starting up under a discourse, hastened away to their respective dioceses. We have thousands of incidents like these on record, but, beyond them all, must ever be reckoned the amazing fact that words may so influence human emotion and human thought, that the careless heart shall be arrested in its folly, and the spirit, drifting to perdition, be attracted back to God! It is amazing—a human voice on the headland of time attracting and fascinating a spirit to a happy eternity!

The pulpit needs more of moral force.* Preachers are afraid of force in the pulpit. There is no real eloquence without force—vehemence. The calmest flow of the river needs somewhere the rush of the tide, or the cataract, to give it health and beauty. Vehemence or force is as compatible with tenderness as with denunciation; it is as constituent a part of the tear of love as the tear of terror. The invective of Chatham, the pause of Patrick Henry, the gorgeousness of Burke, the strength of Webster, the march of Fox, all bear testimony to the same

* See a very able article on the American Pulpit, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv., No. 14.

truth—that the force in your own mind is the secret of your command over the minds of others. The force of speech, balanced and held by the great laws of mind and character, is the oxygen of the whole composition. It is the purifying wind; it is the tidal stream; and if you cannot put force of some kind into your speech, it can have no character, and you can never be a speaker.

“Our fathers cast their works in brass, we scrape ours upon glass.” So says the Viscount de Cormenin in his commentary on the eloquence of Mirabeau; but that order of eloquence, however great its achievements, is an order we never desire to see produced or reproduced in the pulpit. We are persuaded that eloquence in the pulpit misses its appropriate field and method, when it becomes a cataract of fire shooting forth from the intellectualised, but still selfish animalism of the orator. Such is not its work—far different indeed. True, our English pulpit has not had many such men; the fewer the better. It may be almost questioned whether that stormy and boisterous eloquence ever effects anything in the long run for the cause of truth and holiness. Certainly it can only effect this by the Word of deeper power beneath it. Still let it be said the world has two gospels—the gospel of sound and the gospel of silence. George Fox was, truly enough, the apostle of the first, as really as Whitefield was. Isaac Pennington was the apostle of the last, not more than Madame Guyon. That preacher is indeed powerful who can stand in his pulpit, as in the cleft of Horeb, and make his people alternately shiver with the strong wind and the

rushing flame, but shall rely, for the fulness of his power, on the utterances of the still small voice. There is a lower nature in man to be preached to, as well as a higher. Perhaps there is a deep meaning in that ancient superstition of the Romish Church that the devil once entered into a monk, and appeared in his form in some of the cities of Italy, and preached with an effect so marvellous that amazing conversions followed his mysterious ministrations. No doubt it is often the case that to reach the highest, preachers must aim at the lowest. They will frequently find the spiritual man, and strike him, while they are aiming at the carnal man. It is our low and animal nature that demands a speech more proportioned with its present degradation than its possible dignity.

Our readers have not forgotten the fable by which Luther rebuked some of the hearers of his day. The lion made a great feast to all the animals, and, among others, invited some swine. The lion provided for them all manner of dainties ; but the pigs, when they were set before the dainties, asked for grains. It is of no use attempting to feed a being beyond its ideal, and beyond its power of digestion. Our friend, the Rev. Tennyson Tasso, has been for years entertaining his people with panoramas of the loftiest Himalayan chains of thought and language. We are sure many of his people have wanted more grains.

May we, in closing this chapter, refer to a tender reminiscence in our own spiritual life ? Some years since, one well-remembered evening, we went into the *Frauen Kirche* in Copenhagen, the chief church

there, the Lutheran cathedral. The church was crowded ; an eminent preacher was in the pulpit. The service, very simple, was much the same as our Congregational form : reading the Scripture, prayer, and congregational singing. We could find no pew, no seat at liberty. We were compelled to sit on the steps of the altar. Over the altar was the world renowned figure of Christ by Thorwaldsen—Thorwaldsen, originally a poor boy, and the son of a poor boat-builder of Jutland, who became the greatest sculptor of the Christian ages. That church is full of that ineffable figure. Thorwaldsen wrought it in his old age, and gave it to the church, wrought it in marble, and devoted it, and the twelve colossal apostles surrounding the church, to the idea of Christianity. We sat there, over us the figure of Christ, the most wonderful figure of Christ, the most satisfying we had ever seen in marble or on canvas. The great artist intended to represent Him as saying, as the pedestal testifies, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." The figure of Christ is about fourteen feet in height ; but its colossal proportions in no way disturb the sense of unity, awe, and majesty. The figures of the twelve apostles are scarcely smaller. We could not follow the sermon, which was in Danish, but certainly eloquent ; but our heart was awed within us. We sat beneath the figure of the Christ ! we looked up to the Christ ! and thought of that young Man, the reputed carpenter's Son, His three years' ministry, and to whose praise now, after all the ages have passed, this building was dedicated, this mighty piece

of art devoted, and the magnificent Te Deum, swelling, "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ!" But on the dais, leading to the altar, is the font, held by an entreating Angel. She, the Angel of Baptism and Invitation, is holding the font in the presence of the whole congregation. This is by the same mighty artist, and also in marble; and we saw that as, in the figure over us, he had seized *the whole idea of the Christ*—"Come unto Me"—so, in the figure of the angel, he had seized the whole idea of the Church, and that the Angel of Baptism was also the Angel of Invitations, and that the idea was of the whole Church entreating the world to come to Christ—the Christ over here as the Spirit, and she there the human pleader. She seemed, in her spotless and wonderful beauty, to put into transcendent life and action the words of the text, "The Spirit and the Bride say, *Come!*!" The Bride says, *Come!* It seemed to us as if the artist had gone beyond most theologians, beyond most preachers, and had seized the true idea of the Church—that the Church is the Angel of Invitations, that the Church exists not to denounce, not to anathematise, not to make creeds, but, with a tender heart and beseeching eye and lip, to persuade men to come to Christ. She only exists for one purpose—to set forth, and to call men to Christ! Her voice, the voice of the true Bride, is not one of denunciation; it is not the voice of petulance, of quarrel, nor of recrimination; it is the voice of gentle and pitiful expostulation. "Come unto Me," says Christ, "and I will give you rest," and the Bride says, *Come!*

Everything in the Christian religion turns to

invitation, but how shall they hear without a preacher to say, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee"? and the preacher should feel that the highest dignity to which he can attain is to be one of those of whom it is written, "Let him that heareth say, Come." The Bride, the Church, often seems to be unseen, or she is like the firmament above our heads, of unattainable and impersonal height. One day, let us hope, we also may be lost in the immensity of its pure splendour. The angel is unseen, but penetrating all things with her province and her power. "I Jesus have sent my angel!" We cannot doubt the voice of the winds, and we cannot doubt that over the world flows the voice of invitation. There is an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach, and the gospel is a voice of invitations saying, "Come!" and the preacher realizes the beauty and the blessedness of his work most purely and gloriously when he separates himself in order to regard himself as a whisper of the voice of the Bride saying, Come! He can go no further. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!"*

* This reminiscence has also been referred to in "The Day, the Book, and the Teacher." By Edwin Paxton Hood. Sunday School Union.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRYSOSTOM: THE THRONE IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

IN the review of the march and procession of the early Church it can never be either a needless or indifferent task to study again, or, in some new portrait, to seek to retouch, or bring into greater vividness, the sublime features of its first fathers, whose words, while they were living, were like battlecries against the idolatry, selfishness, and impurity of the age, and which, although the tongue of fire has long been resolved into dust, retain still an inspiring, and even vocal power. The orators and preachers form a very illustrious gallery of portraits ; there is much about them that is very exemplary. As we study their words and deeds, we find, in truth, how much, perhaps, they owed of their fame and influence to that close union and alliance of the destinies of the Church with the State, which continued so manifest after the period of Constantine. But it may surely be questioned whether their influence at court did not result also from the immense power they wielded over the multitudes of the cities by the purity of Christian doctrine. The reader of Church history will very soon assure himself how the rise of the Church illustrated its

power by the "foolishness of preaching," and the pulpit became a great social influence. The wonder grows upon us how it came to be the mighty and hostile force it exhibits itself as being ; but the study of the character of the early Christian preachers explains this. The school of the rhetorician was changed into the Church, the place of souls ; not the place for the discussion of trivial questions, the vain spoils of philosophy, it was a new moral power in the world. Those men did not obtain their mighty hold over the breathless multitudes by the "disputations of science, falsely so called " ; not by pretty little Platonic essays ; but by words which clave a way right down to the soul ; enforcing the providence of God, the redemption by Christ, the immortality of the soul, and future retribution and judgment ; these were the themes. Fantastic legends and literatures faded out, or fell prostrate and powerless before such truths, flowing from the consciousness of the speaker, informed by the Holy Ghost and the Divine Word, and flaming from the ardent light of vivid experience. The bar, the senate, the school, could kindle no such enthusiasm, and win no such echoes and responses as those which followed the words of the great teachers of those early ages.

It is superfluous to say that modern teachers have not paid sufficient attention to these great masters. A prejudice, it must be now admitted very unfounded, has obtained entrance in many minds against them. This prejudice is dissolving ; and while it is the duty, especially, of every minister to inform himself of the matters in the great story of the Church, it is certainly true that he will find in the first ages,

and among the teachers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, hints eminently useful to him in assailing the sins and the heresies of our own times. Especially pre-eminent, as the orator of the Church, stands forth John, the great preacher of Antioch, who received, in the fourth century, the name by which now he is only known popularly, Chrysostom, or the *Golden Mouth*. He was born, in that city over which his eloquence shed such lustre, and amidst the uproars and agitations of which he became so central an actor, in the year 354. His parentage was distinguished; his father, Secundus, a chief general of the army of Syria, died soon after John was born; his mother, Secunda—not unlike Augustine's gentle Monica—although, like his father, a Gentile pagan, continued unmarried after the death of her husband, living for her son, as we gather from an immortal passage of exquisite beauty in his writings. She appears to have been a woman of great gravity, beauty, and chastity. At the age of twenty, Chrysostom was placed, apparently, beneath the tuition of the great Libanius, a chief master of rhetoric; from him, no doubt, he obtained lessons used with very different purposes from those for which they were given, for John became a Christian, grew weary of what seemed to him the unprofitable study of rhetoric; and the lessons intended to make the shining orator of the bar went to furnish the priest, the preacher, and father of the Church. It was a source of bitter regret to his old master, and on his death-bed he grieved that there was no successor to his school, because the Christians had stolen John from him.

About the early history of Chrysostom and the years before his conversion, there is nothing of that wonderful interest which attaches to the unconverted life of Augustine. Chrysostom had not the same sensuous and passionate nature, therefore had not so fierce a conflict to wage with himself ; he had not the same great roominess of nature as that of the Bishop of Hippo, in whose soul, before his conversion, every sort and kind of heresy and infidelity seemed, at one time or other, to find not a momentary, but a logical lodgment, until all were put to flight, as he tells us in his immortal "Confessions." Then Chrysostom had not very long passed youth when he was converted ; Augustine, on the contrary, was in the very prime of life, in all the vigour of his studies. Chrysostom had never known the ways of vice and sin ; the warm African nature of Augustine had known every seduction of poetry and passion ; he had to put away the person he very tenderly loved, apparently ; and we know in what terms he has celebrated and made memorable his affection for his illegitimate son, Adeodatus. But the conversion of Chrysostom was marked by a reality as distinct as that of Augustine ; he and his friend Basil—evidently not the great bishop—determined on abandoning the world altogether, and flying to the monastery. This was easy for Basil, who had no worldly ties, but Chrysostom had debts to pay to his position, and his property, and, above all, to his mother, whose tender and overwhelming appeal has been preserved to us. She reminded him of all her troubles and miseries in widowhood, all the agitations and disquietudes attending her—a young

woman, without a husband—but all borne for his sake ; how she was tossed in storm and tempest, determined “not to bring a second husband into *your* father’s house” ; not declining the hardships of the iron furnace that, as she says, “I might daily behold *your* face while you were an infant, and have continually before me the image, the character, and resemblance of *your* father.” She implored him not to involve her in a second widowhood. “When you have committed me to the ground, travel whither you please.” Many more words to the same effect the poor mother poured out into the ear and heart of her son. We are afraid that she did not produce so much effect upon him as circumstances did. It is a proof of the importance of Chrysostom in Antioch that at this time, although he could not have been much more than twenty years of age, and had not been very long converted, a report was spread that the Church was about to elevate him to the office of bishop. Our readers will bear in mind the immense difference between our idea of a bishop and that of the early Christians. He fled from the city, going for some time to reside among the monks near Antioch. Of his mother we only hear that she died shortly afterwards ; it does not seem probable that he really joined the monks until after that event. The beautiful, chaste, self-denying pagan lady never saw the greatness and glory of her son. She never heard any of those marvellous orations, did not know that the lips which had been so much to her,—kissed so fondly and so often, as mothers only can kiss,—were through all after-ages to be called *the golden*. She soon passes out of sight, but as-

suredly her son did her justice, and treasured her memory. The name and memory of Monica have been held very dear in church history; but let us, as we pass by, look lovingly and tenderly upon, and set a fair white lily over the grave of Secunda.

Six years Chrysostom continued among the mountains and the monasteries; for some time he dwelt in a cave with an aged hermit; solitary, shut up in a still more lonely cell, he spent some other two years, taking little rest, pondering closely the Word, conversing with himself; seeking out that he might obtain the grace of spiritual strength to scatter, and rout, and put to flight the sins lurking in his nature. He seems to have been ordained by the Bishop Miletius as a reader and deacon of the Church in Antioch about the year 381. He returned to the city, learned and accomplished in every art and gift necessary to the sacred orator. When he left, he was an accomplished rhetorician; and we can well conceive what effect six years of solitude among the mountains, with no other book than the Sacred Word, would have upon a nature able to receive it. The moment soon came when his mighty oratory was put forth with all its vehemence and strength. So long as he continued in Antioch his voice was like a bell, chiming or tolling, and certainly the sonorous tones of the knell predominate over the silvery notes of the chime. Among the most intrepid and noble of his orations is the series on *The Statues*. Oppressed and harassed by taxation, the people of Antioch,—naturally a turbulent and unquiet race,—rose in tumult and uproar against a warrant for a new assessment. It

created no small irritation ; they encouraged one another to revolt, until, in the turmoil of the streets, the brazen statues of the Emperor and his wife Flavilla were torn down, and dragged ignominiously by ropes, with insolent rudeness and bitter sarcasm, through the city. Scarcely had the deed been done than all the inhabitants were in mourning and fear. In our country and age such an indignity would very likely produce unhappy results ; what then might be expected in the very era of imperial cruelty ? Fear spread on every hand ; those who could fly the city fled ; those who were taken were hurried off to prison. The forum, a few days before crowded, was deserted, and, here and there, a few frightened and trembling people might be seen skulking about with dejected looks. Images of confiscation, death, and worse than death, were before all men's eyes. In the panic the good Bishop Flavianus took upon himself to go as an ambassador of peace to the Emperor. It was winter ; he was aged, and a man of many infirmities. The distance was considerable ; his sister, too, was dying ; but he went. Chrysostom was left in the mourning city ; he walked through it, and saw its profound distress, its silence only broken by the armed guards, with swords and spears resisting the wailing women and children who were seeking to throng the courts of justice to save their husbands and fathers. While the Bishop was on his way to the metropolis, Chrysostom called the people daily to the church ; there, in their agitated and trembling midst, he pronounced those twenty-one homilies concerning *The Statues*. While the Bishop was

seeking to turn aside the imperial wrath, Chrysostom wrought day by day upon the crowds in the church. The following passage is a very fine illustration of the natural and easy yet forcible way in which the orator turns the circumstance to account, and, with great art, preaches to the Emperor for mercy, while, in reality, he reproves the sins and passions of the people. Thus he exclaims in a passage on

THE BOUNDLESS LOVING-KINDNESS OF GOD.

“A man has been insulted, and we are all in fear and trembling—both those of us who have been guilty of this insult, and those of us who are conscious of innocence. But God is insulted every day. Why do I say every day? Rather should I say every hour, by rich and by poor, by those who are at ease and those who are in trouble, by those who calumniate and those who are calumniated; and yet there is never a word of this; therefore God has permitted our fellow-servant to be insulted, that thou mayest know the loving-kindness of the Lord. This offence has been committed only for the first time, yet we do not, on that account, expect to reap the advantage of excuse or apology. We provoke God every day, and make no movement of returning to Him; and yet He bears with all long-suffering; see you how great is the loving-kindness of the Lord. In this present outrage, the culprits have been apprehended, thrown into prison, and punished; and yet we are in fear. He who has been insulted has not heard of what has been done, nor pronounced sentence; and we are all trembling. But God hears day by day the insults offered to Him, and no one turns to Him, although God is so kind and loving. With Him it is enough to acknowledge the sin, and the guilt is absolved; . . . do you not hence conclude how unspeak-

able is the love of God, how boundless, how it surpasses all description ! Here he who has been insulted is of the same nature with ourselves ; only once, in all his life, has he been so treated, and that not to his face, not while he was present, and seeing, and hearing, and yet none of the offenders have been pardoned. But in the case of God, not one of these things can be said. For so vast is the distance between man and God, that no words can express it, and every day is He insulted while He is present, looking on, and hearing ; and yet He neither hurls thunderbolts, nor bids the sea overflow the earth and drown all its inhabitants, nor commands the earth to yawn and swallow up all who have insulted Him ; but He forbears, and is long-suffering, and offers pardon to those by whom He has been outraged, if they only repent and promise to do so no more. Oh, surely it is time to exclaim, Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord ? Who can show forth His praise ? ”

As to the friendly Bishop, it is pleasing to know that he was well and kindly entertained by the Emperor. He held a long intercourse with him, during which the old man reminded him of the example of his ancestor, Constantine, who, when his statue had been miserably abused, and its face battered and broken, passed his hands over his face, saying, “ I do not feel myself bruised and broken, and my head and face seem sound and whole ” ; and then he used the better authority of Him who said, “ If ye forgive men their trespasses,” etc., etc. ; and the Emperor courteously entreated him, and then, with pardons in his possession, hastened his return back. The good old Bishop, unable to travel very fast, forwarded the good news before him ; and we learn how, when he entered the city. it was

all ablaze with rejoicing lights, the forum decorated with garlands and flowers, and green boughs over all the shops and doors—quite a festive solemnity. And then the dear old Bishop went to the church to give thanks; and Chrysostom, in the place where, during the Bishop's absence, he had poured forth his jeremiads, now, for the prosperous success of the undertaking, pronounced an oration full of gratulation and joy.

No doubt the behaviour of Chrysostom on this occasion, joined to his favourable eminence in opinion before, made him to be a man who could not be hidden. In the year 398 he was consecrated and enthroned Bishop of Constantinople. Ministers at the present day, who leave one charge or diocese for another, are in no danger of creating such a turmoil as that caused by the rumour of the probable removal of Chrysostom from Antioch. The people could not tolerate the idea of the departure from their midst of their admired, eloquent, and beloved preacher; nor did it appear that the preacher himself desired to remove; and, probably, had he known what circumstances were to come out of this consecration, the Emperor himself would not have been so determined in his design. Fearing, however, a popular tumult, a letter was written to the governor of the province to manage the matter. He desired Chrysostom to walk a little way with him out of the town, decoyed him into his carriage, and drove him to the next stage beyond Antioch; there he was delivered into the custody of the officers of the Government sent by the Emperor to receive him. The Emperor had desired that his Consecration

should take place with circumstances of especial pomp and solemnity, and a convention of bishops was summoned to assist at it; and thus, by guile and craft, seldom needed in the history of the Church for elevation to such dignity, the people of Antioch lost their pastor, and Chrysostom became a bishop.

From this time, he enters upon that course of events in his life which should commend him most to the notice of preachers and teachers. In the great metropolis of the East, he became a great social reformer. His discourses are richly exemplary; vehemently lashing the vices of the city and the sins of the clergy. There had been, indeed, from the corrupt members of the Church of Constantinople considerable opposition to his elevation. Constantinople, then the chief city of the world, the seat of the empire of the East, the seat of the Court, could not, of course, be supposed to be exempt from those sins especially peculiar to great cities. The preacher, among those of his own profession and those who lived only to amuse, found and satirized "such as sold their voices to their bellies,"—a very admirable description, by the bye, of many a preacher and singer of succeeding times. Even Dean Milman has apparently judged Chrysostom somewhat coldly, because he carried into his public administration more of the manners of the ascetic than seemed politic in a position of such importance. Gibbon, of course, cannot be expected to sympathize with the man whose loud thunders against the scandals of the Church, or the vices of the city, ere long brought him into immediate hostility with the indignation

alike of the chiefs of Church and State. It is probable that such a temper as that possessed by the vehement orator of St. Sophia was choleric ; and in a state of affairs languishing beneath a plethora of ill-humours he attempted too rapid a reform. The clergy were aroused, and sought to traduce him to the people ; but yet the stainless grandeur of his own life, so sombre and solemn, gave more vivid brilliancy to his amazing orations. He soon found himself, however, the centre of an immense conspiracy, to which also the Emperor and Empress lent themselves. It is possible, as Milman very distinctly reasons, that he permitted himself to be too much influenced by the representations of his deacon, Serapion. Finally, however, he was cited to the celebrated Synod of the Oak ; forty-six charges were preferred against him, which even the sceptical and sarcastic Gibbon, who never misses his opportunity for snubbing and sneering at a saint, says, "may justly be considered as a fair and unexceptional panegyric." Four times the citation was served upon the Bishop by the representatives of the Council ; he refused, as they considered, contumaciously, to entrust either his life or reputation in their hands. While the envenomed conclave was sitting, he continued preaching, surrounded himself by the bishops of his party, and remained intrepid and unmoved. As we read of these things, it is possible to move back, in imagination and thought, to those agitated days. We are able to read calmly until we remember that life and existence hung upon the decision of the Council ; but amidst the troubles of his companions, some of whom were in tears,

some, unable to control or to confine their passion, humbly embracing and kissing his garments—“Brethren,” said he, “sit down, and do not weep; for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”; and then followed those magnificent, immortal words, we presume not unknown to many of our readers; words falling from his lips while the sentence of banishment was being pronounced:—

‘What can I fear? Will it be death? But you know that Christ is my life, and that I shall gain by death. Will it be exile? But the earth and all its fulness is the Lord’s. Will it be the loss of wealth? But we brought nothing into the world, and can carry nothing out. Thus all the terrors of the world are contemptible in my eyes; and I smile at all its good things. Poverty I do not fear. Riches I do not sigh for. Death I do not shrink from; and Life I do not desire, save only for the progress of your souls. But you know, my friends, the true cause of my fall. It is that I have not lined my house with rich tapestry. It is that I have not clothed me in robes of silk. It is that I have not flattered the effeminacy and sensuality of certain men, nor laid gold and silver at their feet. But why need I say more? Jezebel is raising her persecution, and Elias must fly; Herodias is taking her pleasure, and John must be bound with chains; the Egyptian wife tells her lie, and Joseph must be thrust into prison. And so, if they banish me, I shall be like Elias; if they throw me in the mire, like Jeremiah; if they plunge me into the sea, like the prophet Jonah; if into the pit, like Daniel; if they stone me, it is Stephen that I shall resemble; John the forerunner, if they cut off my head; Paul, if they beat me with stripes; Isaiah, if they saw me asunder.’

The Emperor was called upon to ratify the decree of deposition pronounced by the Council; and the

too visible and manifest reflections on the Empress in the passage we have just cited very likely made it more easy to him to yield his sanction to the sentence. John was speedily arrested, in quite another fashion than that in which he was hurried away to his stormy bishopric. He was conveyed through the city by an imperial messenger, and landed, after a short navigation, at the mouth of the Euxine. The people of the city were astounded. During the Council of the Oak, they had been comparatively mute and passive. His arrest roused the city to such a height of indignation as has not often, in such an instance, been crowned with a like success, even where its object has been devotion and enthusiasm to greatness and goodness in the presence of a corrupt court. Very likely, not a little was added to the intensity and wonder of the hour by the throb of an earthquake, which shook the city that very night, and, while it created some ruin, seemed to be portentous of more. Even the Empress fell on her knees before the Emperor, and besought him to recall the saintly but audacious orator. She, who had certainly been involved deeply in the machinations against him,—and no wonder, when it is remembered that she had not escaped either the satire or the vehemence of this Knox of the early Church,—now protested herself quite innocent of all the troubles which had come upon him, declaring how she honoured him, not only as her own bishop, but particularly as the person who had baptized her children. Round the palace raged and roared the immense waves of popular commotion ; it was manifest that the public safety could only be purchased

by the return of the minister, and messengers were sent to hasten his return ; and the historian of "The Decline and Fall" has, even without a sneer, recited how the shores of Europe and Asia were illuminated, and the Bosphorus crowded with boats, to the mouth of the Propontis, as the victorious people accompanied, with flaming torches, their archbishop from the port to the cathedral. He, indeed, with an inflexibility which, of course, was part of his character, was loath to yield to any prayers for his return, until his innocence should be vindicated before a greater synod than that by which he had been condemned, and his sentence legally reversed. But the people were impatient of delay, and the Empress also sent to compliment him, declaring that his return to the city was more to her than the crown she wore, and, in approved Oriental language, expressing how she had restored the head to the body, the pilot to the ship, the pastor to the flock. So he yielded, and was met on his way by multitudes of the people, singing hymns to God for his return. Thus they bore him to the cathedral, and no protest of his that he was under ecclesiastical censure and had no right there, was of any avail ; they would have him ascend the Bishop's throne, and give his blessing and an extempore sermon, which has been lost, though some who heard it spoke of it as one of the most considerable of his life. We know little more of it than that he spoke till the people would allow him to speak no longer—borne down and overwhelmed by their acclamations. What men of might were the bishops of those distant days !

But auspicious as were the circumstances of the

orator's return, no reader can be much surprised to find that they were not omens either of long-continued peace, or of a happy close to his career. He soon vexed the Empress again. Her irritation against him in the days of the first persecution grew out of his sharp rebukes of court fashions. It soon seemed that he had even a stronger and more personal ground for rebuke as a Christian minister. A silver statue of the Empress, Eudoxia, was to be solemnly erected ; it was to be elevated on a porphyry pillar in the street, and not far from the spot where stood the Church of St. Sophia. Its elevation and inauguration were accompanied, not only by many shoutings, dances, and extravagances, but by certain loose sports and pastimes, very suitable to the idolatries of Manichæanism or semi-paganism. The provost of the city was a Manichæan, and, therefore, encouraged this kind of looseness. Chrysostom's speech rushed out instantly in an unwise blaze of vehement invective. If readers, quietly perusing these pages of church history, think that a milder course of expostulation would have been more wise, let it be conceded that Rome and the world were only just then emerging from paganism—these rites were of the very nature of paganism. In the latter years of the reign of paganism in the empire, emperors had demanded and received the blasphemy of an apotheosis. Assuredly, however, the preacher could have had little affection or respect for the woman herself. In one of his sermons at this period, he drew the character of an ill woman, affirming that no beast in the world, nor lion, nor dragon, is comparable to a bad woman ; and he

enforced and illustrated this by many examples from Scripture: then also he turned the tables, and discoursed of the qualities, nature, and actions of good women. The Empress was again roused to indignation. Again, from this circumstance, active machinations were formed against him; the persecution reached a considerable height; the clergy who sided with him were seized, beaten, wounded, and imprisoned; the waters of the baptistery, where he officiated, were stained with blood. Looked at from this point of view, we see that it was the strong and malignant action of paganism against a pure Christianity.

At last, power used its utmost insolence. It was determined by the Court, and that part of the Church which sided with it, that he should again be deposed and banished. The city was in a strange agitation, when suddenly a fire broke out in his magnificent cathedral. The conflagration spread, and left no part of the stately fabric untouched; the triumphant flames rolled along the aisles, and some choice pieces of antiquity are now probably lost to us, as they perished in that great calamity, in which, however, neither man nor beast was injured. The most monstrous circumstance of all was that Chrysostom was himself charged with setting fire to the church; his case was indeed hopeless; he had left it; he had bidden farewell to his deaconesses; he had, in fact, withdrawn from the friendly custody of his adherents, and was on his way, while his church was in flames, to the Asiatic shore. The charge, of course, was only one of the monstrous malignities of the time, vexing the heart and increas-

ing the agony of the persecuted man. After his surrender and departure in that ill night, he never saw Constantinople again. Henceforth he was a prisoner, wandering amidst places, if it were possible to find them, where his friends would not flock round him, to love and reverence. But his influence continued during his absence. From his solitary cell among the mountains of the Caucasus, although another bishop had been enthroned in his place, he governed his church,—almost the whole of the Eastern Church. As he entered towns and neighbourhoods—as when he came upon the frontiers of Cappadocia and Tauro-Cilesia—bishops, monks, and holy women met him in great companies, thronging round him with tears, and saying that it were better the sun should not shine in the heavens, than John should be silenced. He carried with him a wasted and painful frame, subject to many and grievous sicknesses ; he wandered, shifting from place to place, regarding woods and rocks as his best security ; and Tavernier, the traveller, tells of a town in Armenia two miles from which, in the midst of a plain, rises a rugged rock, in the which was a hewn chamber, and bed, table, and cupboard, and, after some several steps cut in the rock, a little gallery leading to another chamber ; and the tradition of the Christians of that place in the time of Tavernier was that here the eloquent and saintly exile passed a hard winter. The Bishop of Rome, Innocent, wrote to him, assuring him of his affection, seeking thus to sustain him in his exile. This was towards the close of his course. It was necessary to destroy his influence, as well as to compel his exile. The soldiers were

cruel to him, by the imperial edict compelling him to travel, when his wasted frame could bear no toil, through violent rains and burning suns.

At last they came to Comana, a town in Cappadocia ; he was not permitted to lodge in the town, but hurried forward till they reached the oratory of St. Basil, five or six miles off. St. Basil had been Bishop of Comana, and died a martyr under Maximian. The legend says that, the night before, the martyr had appeared to Brother John, and said, "Be of good cheer, brother ; to-morrow we shall be together!" Moreover, the legend continues, the martyr had appeared to the bishop of the place bidding him "provide for Brother John on the morrow." When, therefore, Chrysostom reached the oratory, he requested of his guard that he might stay there, but they hurried him forward. They had not, however, gone more than three or four miles, when he became so ill that they were obliged to return. As soon as he entered, he called for the brethren to give him some clean, white raiment. He stripped himself, and having put on the clothing they brought him, he received the Sacrament from their hands, and then, having performed these last duties for himself, especially the former, indicative, we have often thought, of the saintly delicacy of his nature, he concluded with his favourite doxology, "Glory be to God for all things that happen!" sealed it with "Amen!" gently stretched himself out, and died.

The secrecy with which he had been carried from place to place, and the lonely desert spot where he breathed his last, were unable to prevent an amazing

throng of holy people from following him to his grave. He was buried in the same tomb with the martyr Basil, who had met him and told him to "be of good comfort." His long life was packed up into the small compass of fifty-two years. His remains were not allowed to rest in the obscure spot in which they were interred. When the Emperor Arcadius and his wife Eudoxia had passed away, and Theodosius the younger, who had been baptized by the banished Bishop, reigned, he was besought to permit the restoration of the venerable remains ; the request was instantly granted. Once more the Bosphorus was alive and aglow on account of Chrysostom, but this time with a more melancholy pomp. As the body touched the shore, the young Emperor and Empress, accompanied by their sisters, approached the coffin ; which the former kissed and then covered with his imperial cloak, and implored forgiveness from Heaven for the wrongs his parents had inflicted on the holy ascetic ; then the remains were carried to their final resting-place. Envy and malice had done their worst.

The memory of the holy preacher has never needed a defender ; the virulence and the vice of party and power cast him down in his own day, but even then, and ever after, his righteousness has shone forth as the light. It has been said, the works of Chrysostom are the study of a lifetime ; they are voluminous ; the tender bursts of his immortal eloquence, if, occasionally, they seem to verge towards inflation, are, nevertheless, fine models of the way in which Christian rhetoric may reach its most passionate harangue and declama-

tion ; while, better still, his more calm and sober moods furnish wiser models of exposition than even the wonderful and manifold pages of Augustine. Nothing can be finer, more rich in Gospel sweetness, and more elevated in pathos, than the following passage on

THE SALVATION OF THE THIEF

“Would you learn another most illustrious achievement of the Cross, transcending all human thought? The closed gate of Paradise He has opened to-day ; for to-day He has brought into it *the thief*. Two most sublime achievements these! He both opened Paradise, and brought in *the thief*. He restored to him the primeval fatherland of man ; He led him back to the ancestral city. ‘To-day shalt thou be with me,’ He says, ‘in Paradise.’ ‘What sayest thou? Thou art crucified and fixed to the Cross with nails, and dost thou promise Paradise? How wilt thou confer such a gift?’ Paul, indeed, says, ‘He was crucified in weakness’ ; but hear what follows. ‘Yet He liveth,’ he says, ‘by the power of God ;’ and again, in another place, ‘My strength is made perfect in weakness. Wherefore, now on the Cross,’ he says, ‘I promise that by this thou mayest know My power.’ The spectacle itself is sad : look not at what the Cross is in itself, lest thou despair, but raise thine eye to the power of the Crucified, that thy countenance may gleam with the radiance of joy—for this end He shows to thee there His might.

“For it was not when raising the dead, it was not when commanding the sea, it was not when chiding demons,—but when crucified, nailed to the tree, insulted, spit upon, railed at, mocked, tortured by all,—that He exerted His might in drawing to Himself the sinful soul of *the thief*. See, on this side and that, the effulgence of His power. He shook creation, rent the rocks ; and the heart of *the thief*—

harder than rock, He made softer than wax. ‘To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.’ What sayest thou! The cherubim and the flaming sword guard Paradise, and dost thou promise admission there to the *thief*? ‘Yea,’ is His reply, ‘for I am the Lord of the cherubim, and I have the power of flame and hell, and life and death.’ And therefore He says, ‘To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.’ The moment these celestial powers behold their Lord, they will withdraw and give place.

“Though no king would permit *a thief* or any one of his servants to occupy the same seat with him, and to ride thus into the city, yet our gracious Lord did it. For at His entrance into His holy fatherland, He brings in along with Him the thief; not dishonouring Paradise with the feet of the thief—far be it from Him—but rather in this way conferring on it honour. For it is the glory of Paradise to have such a Lord, so full of power and love, as to be able to make *a thief* worthy of the joys of Paradise.

“For when He called publicans and harlots into the kingdom, He did this not to dishonour the kingdom, but to confer on it the highest renown, and to show that the Lord of the kingdom is such as to be able to bestow on harlots and publicans an excellence so perfect, that they are seen to be worthy of the honours and gifts that are there.

“As, therefore, we admire a physician when we see those who are labouring under incurable diseases released from their maladies, and restored to perfect health, so, beloved, admire Christ, and be astonished that, laying His hand on those that are afflicted with incurable maladies of the soul, He has power to deliver them from the evils under which they groan, and make those who have reached the utmost extremity of wickedness fit for the kingdom of heaven.”

The eloquence of Chrysostom is of that rich order both of expression and illustration, that, weighty and

magnificent as it is, it becomes apprehensible by every order of mind.

How stirring it must have been, in the ancient Church, in such an epoch, to have heard him break forth in the following exclamation, in which he contrasts the lamentations of the heathen over their dead with the lights, and hymns, and sacramental service, with which the early Christians celebrated the obsequies of the departed.

THE BURIAL RITES OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

“Tell me what mean the bright shining torches? Do we not accompany the dead as brave warriors? What mean the hymns! Do we not praise God, and render thanks to Him, that He hath now crowned the departed? that He hath freed him from his sufferings, and hath taken him from misery to Himself? Consider what ye sing at that moment! ‘Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.’ Again: ‘The Lord is on my side; I will not fear’; and again: ‘Thou art my hiding place from the trouble which encompasseth me’ (Psalm cxvi. 7; cxviii. 6; xxxii. 7). Consider what these Psalms mean. But ye heed them not, and are drunken with grief. Or regard the mourning of others, that ye may find therein consolation for your own. Ye say, ‘Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!’ *and yet ye weep* (Psalm xvi. 7).”

Sometimes, with a startling, beautiful ingenuity, he seized upon some little passing incident, and made it exquisitely effective. Thus once, while he was preaching, they began to light the lamps, and he exclaimed:—

“Let me beg you to arouse yourselves, and to put away

that sluggishness of mind. But why do I say this? At the very time when I am setting forth before you the Scriptures, you are turning your eyes away from me, and fixing them upon *the lamps, and upon the man who is lighting the lamps.* Oh! of what a sluggish soul is this the mark, to leave the preacher, and turn to him! *I, too, am kindling the fire of the Scriptures;* and upon my tongue there is burning a taper, the taper of sound doctrine. Greater is this light and better, than the light that is yonder. For, unlike that man, it is no wick steeped in oil that I am lighting up. I am rather inflaming souls, moistened with piety, by the desire of heavenly discourse."

In this age of gorgeous household architecture, when the saints in many a neighbourhood are content to dwell in their ceiled houses, while the house of the Lord lies waste, perhaps some may read the following with pleasure:—

THE PALACE OF ABRAHAM.

"Paul, when exhorting the rich not to be high-minded, taught them the way to guard against it. They were to examine the uncertain and treacherous nature of riches. Wherefore he said: 'Nor trust in uncertain riches.' He is not rich who possesseth much, but he who distributeth much. Abraham was rich, but loved not his wealth: he regarded not the house of this man, nor the substance of that man; but, going forth, he looked round for the stranger and the needy, that he might succour poverty; that he might entertain the wayfarer. He covered not his ceilings with gold, but fixing his tent near the oak, he was contented with the shade of its leaves. Yet so bright was his dwelling, that angels were not ashamed to tarry with him; for they sought not splendour of abode, but purity of soul. Let us, my beloved, imitate Abraham, and dispense our goods to

those who are in need. Rudely prepared was his habitation, but more splendid than the halls of kings. No king ever entertained angels; but Abraham sitting under the oak, and having his tent pitched, was accounted worthy of that honour. Neither was he thus distinguished on account of the lowliness of his dwelling; but he enjoyed this gift, because of the purity of his soul and the treasures therein deposited. Let us not then adorn our houses, but rather our souls. Is it not a disgrace thoughtlessly to adorn our walls with marble, but to neglect the necessities of our Christian brethren? Of what use to thee, O man! is thy palace? Canst thou take it up and depart with it? But thy soul thou canst take up entire, and carry along with thee. Lo! now that so great peril hath come upon us, let our palaces aid us; let them deliver us from the impending danger, but they cannot. And ye are my witnesses, who, leaving your palaces desolate and flying to the wilderness, shun them as snares and nets. Let riches now assist us; but the present is no season for them. If the influence of riches be insufficient to appease the anger of man, much less will be their power before the Divine and implacable seat of judgment. If gold now availeth us nothing against an irritated and wrathful man, its power will entirely vanish before the displeasure of God, who needeth not gold. Let us build houses to dwell in, not to make of them a vain display. That which exceedeth our necessities is superfluous and useless. Bind on a sandal larger than thy foot, and thou wilt not be able to endure it. It will impede thy walking. Thus also a house greater than is necessary impedeth thy passage to heaven. Wouldest thou raise vast and splendid habitations? I forbid them not; but let them not be on earth. Build tabernacles in heaven,—tabernacles imperishable. Why ravest thou about transitory things, things which remain on earth? Nothing is more deceitful than wealth; to-day with thee, to-morrow against thee. It armeth on all sides the eyes of the envious. It is a hostile

warrior in thine own tent, an enemy in thine own house ; and ye, who possess it, are my witnesses, who in every mode are burying and concealing it."

The words and sermons of Chrysostom, like those of our own Reeves or Brookes, are among the little historiettes which bring vividly before us the manners, and vices, and people of the cities in which he preached. One of his biographers says that "the Emperor, the commissioners, bishops, and prefects, are by his genius preserved like pieces of sea-weed in amber." And, running our eye down several passages, we could easily fill pages with illustrations of this ; but our sketch of this illustrious Father has already extended to too great a length, and we must close our quotations with a noble passage poured forth soon after his brief restoration to Constantinople :—

HIS RETURN FROM EXILE.

"Blessed be the Lord ! I said it when I departed. On my return, I repeat it ; and I ceased not from saying it in my absence. You remember that on the last day I recalled to you the image of Job, and his words, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever.' It is the pledge that I left with you as I was departing ; it is the thanksgiving that I bring back to you. The situations are different. The hymn of gratitude is the same. In exile I was always blessing. Returned from exile, I am blessing still. Winter and summer work to the same end, the fertility of the earth. Blessed be God, who allowed me to go forth ; blessed again and again, in that He has called me back to you. Blessed be God, who unchains the tempest ; blessed be God, who stills it, and has made a calm. . . . Through all the diversity

of time the temper of the soul is the same ; and the pilot's courage has been neither relaxed by the calm, nor overwhelmed by the tempest. . . . See what the snares of my enemies have done ; they have increased affection, and kindled regret for me, and have won me six hundred admirers. At other times it is our own body alone who love me. To-day, the very Jews do me honour ; . . . it is not the enemies that I thank for their change of mind, but God, who has turned their injustice to my honour. The Jews crucified the Lord, and the world is saved ; yet it is not the Jews that I thank, but the Crucified. May they see that which our God sees : the peace, the glory that their snares have been worth to me. At other times, the church alone used to be filled. Now the public square is become the church. All heads are as immovable as if they were one. All are silent, though no one orders silence. All are contrite, too. There are games in the circus to-day, but no one assists at them. All flow to the temple like a torrent. The torrent is your multitude. The river's murmur is your voices, that rise up to heaven, and tell of the love you bear to your Father. Your prayers are to me a brighter crown than all the diadems of earth."

On the whole, none of the great names of those early ecclesiastical ages wins from us more admiration and affection than that of this illustrious man. Great as he was as an orator, he shines not merely by the splendours of his rhetoric ; indeed, he steadily resisted the growing, and too prevalent idea, that the Christian teacher should be a mere orator. He reproved the growing error of his times, a passion for public discourses, and the disposition of auditors, as he says, "to conduct themselves like spectators at the heathen games." He constantly reproved the disposition to applaud, and frequently, when it

broke forth in homage to himself, he exclaimed, "The church is not a theatre in which we should listen to be amused ; of what avail to me are those shouts—this applause, this tumult ? The praise I seek is that you show forth in your works the things I have spoken to you." Applause in the Church, very common in his day, he strongly denounced, as transferring to that hallowed place the laws of the theatre. He set a very high standard for the Christian minister : "Let him," said he, "not approach the pulpit who can neither combat the enemies of our faith, nor bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, nor cast down vain imaginations." When he spoke of the preachers in his time as going about after the fashion of harlots, rather "to seek the favour of the people, than to instruct them," it is not surprising that rebuke so vehement and indignant brought down upon his head the condemnation of his own holiness.

Immense as was his power while living, and greater still, and more extensive as his fame has been since his death, Chrysostom does not flatter the theory of those who demand a grand and imposing figure for the loftiest oratory. He was low of stature ; his head was big, but entirely bald ; his forehead large and full of wrinkles ; still more singular, his eyes were not prominent, but deep-set, sunk inwards, though they are described as amiable and affectionate ; nor does his manner seem to be that of which we speak as the "flood of eloquence"—it was the grandeur of expression, the holiness and purity of conception, united, of course, to a

voice of considerable flexibility and strength of tone ;—nor does he seem to have attempted to inflame the people by much action. *Distinctness* we gather to have been a power with him ; and in the old church, either of Antioch or Constantinople, we do not find it difficult to conceive the quiet power of his manner, expressing the delightful and graceful graciousness of many a paragraph ; or the fore-finger of the right hand elevated till it clinched the argument, or, as was more common with him, expressing some vehement and indignant sentence by pressing it on the palm of the left hand. He had, as is abundantly shown, great copiousness and plenty of words ; infinite sweetness, and an impetus of soul and nervous efficacy, which gave material strength to all his speech. Thus, in every point of view, he compels our attention ; we feel that we are not merely with a man great in his own hour, or age, or city. He had, in a very eminent degree, the talents of facility conjoined to perspicuity. We could trust him not merely when a multitude had to be commanded, but when a text had to be elucidated. Meantime, he also had, in a very eminent degree, that profound intensity of character which, we are persuaded, is the root of all truest oratory, which itself is the organ of faith, and which, as in this illustrious instance, makes the life a high and noble consistency. Writers have, ere now, compared Augustine to St. John, Chrysostom to St. Paul ; the correctness of the comparison is not, at first sight, most distinctly recognised ; yet the more we look upon the men, the more we see this is their order : and much in the history of the mind

and life of Chrysostom suggests comparison with him whose writings he most dearly loved and closely studied.

Such was this mighty preacher of the early Church, pre-eminently the Preacher. Augustine was a mighty and subtle metaphysician, a wonderful expositor, though we suppose those of us who are even his greatest admirers would scarcely regard him as a popular, however pleasing, "expositor." Jerome was, in his way, a great interpreter; and Athanasius wielded a pen of iron in his mighty controversies; he was able, in a nobly magnanimous manner, to stand against the whole world—*Athanasius contra mundum*. But Chrysostom was the preacher! Those who desire to know much about him will have to look through various and scattered materials; his works in their original form are not easily to be mastered, excepting by devoted, and more special students than most of us, in these busy days, have time or opportunity to be. They have been likened to a vast Herculaneum, whose specimens of all that is rich and rare in Christian antiquity lie garnered up ready to reward the labour of excavation; but their dead language, ligatures, barbarous contractions, and interminable paragraphs—we confess, frightening us as we have enviously but vainly looked upon the bulky editions in which the words of the *Golden Mouth* are enshrined—remind us, as they have reminded others, of an antique city covered with a thick lava crust. He appears to have been a favourite with Jeremy Taylor, and when Coleridge, once looking over Taylor's pages, met with an extract from the ancient preacher, he

exclaimed, "What a vivid figure! It is enough to make any man set to work to read Chrysostom!" We hope we may yet, in future pages of this work, find ourselves under the necessity of listening again to some of the accents from the Golden Mouth.

CHAPTER VIII.

WIT, HUMOUR, AND DROLLERY IN THE PULPIT.

THE title of this chapter must seem strange, even discrepant, in the story of pulpit eloquence, almost like the spectacle of a mountebank on a throne ; and yet instances are not wanting of wits and humorists who have even gathered their thousands in the temple. Is such an association tolerable ?

Among the contributions of Hiram, king of Tarshish, to Solomon, the great builder of the temple of Jerusalem, in the report presented in the Second Book of Chronicles, there stands the very curious item of monkeys and peacocks.

Monkeys and peacocks have been very plentiful in the service and the building of the temple from the time of Solomon, and in all ages since, especially the apes and the monkeys. If, in a previous chapter, we had, in the false finery of the pulpit, some instances of the peacock, in this, in irreverent drollery, we might introduce some illustrations of the monkey and ape. It might seem singular how that quaint, queer, and even disgusting beast can ever minister to the service of the masters of wisdom ; but it is certain that foolishness has sometimes aided the

plans and the purposes of highest and holiest things. We have often been amazed at the very strange human things we behold sometimes in the scheme of providence, and how all unlikely things have their place and are used up, and when we see, and are called upon to account for this, we can only give the same answer given by those to whom the question was put, "Why loose ye the ass?" when they replied, "The Master hath need of him." It is a reply we have often been compelled to give when we have seen creatures, just as unlikely, employed in even a Divine kind of work.

Indeed, we think it must be admitted, we are not so squeamish in our ears as in our appetites; yet is it with food for the mind as with food for the stomach,—all food which seems coarse is not really coarse; good oatmeal is a fine, honest, nutritive diet, while the tasty kickshaws, drenched in condiments and sauces, of a Paris cook, are among the most gross and vicious, the most really coarse and innutritive abominations which can vex the stomach. The Rev. Mr. Treacle has sometimes offended our gastric tastes; but we could never listen to the Rev. Mr. Honeyman for five minutes without being surfeited and sickened; true, we have no wish to make a meal from the *menu* of either the one or the other.

We make these remarks chiefly with reference to that queer person, the droll, in the pulpit. Sanctified genius may be thronged by multitudes, but the droll is always sure to gather a crowd, and there are those who in the pulpit dare to emulate the nonsense and the notoriety of the cheap-jack, or the

clown of the booth in the village fair. We need not covet their fame!

An archbishop and a dean of our English Church were walking familiarly past one of those great temples in London in which the notoriety of the preacher, for his oddities of speech and manner, drew together massive congregations (we shall only say the chapel could not be Mr. Spurgeon's), when the amiable Dean said to his friend, "There now, Bishop, we have nobody in our Church who can gather the crowds of that man. I wish we had some one who could reach the ears of thousands of plain folks!" The Archbishop took the arm of his companion and gently said, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ass."*

But wit, humour, and drollery in the pulpit! the mere idea of either one or the other will to many, perhaps, be perfectly intolerable and shocking. And yet perhaps each may have a place, and we know how Wisdom is justified of her children. The subject of this chapter is a large one; it might fill a volume. Perhaps in our day the taste of the populace has improved. Perhaps the things altogether outrageous to good sense and propriety would not be dictated now by the mind of any speaker. But we are far from thinking they would not be tolerated if they were uttered, and we think we perceive a disposition to return to those times when the unction of a discourse was in its gross coarseness, and its pith and power were in its offensiveness. Perhaps it is impossible to wield an influence over immense masses of people without

* See an old number of the *Saturday Review*.

something of this, and, certainly, it is true that it has often been the case that those sacred orators who have moved multitudes have done so, if not constantly and principally, then frequently by offences against the canons of good taste.

The history of the pulpit furnishes some strange instances. Against the occasional legitimate use of humour we can have little to say ; those who *can* use them with skill may find those weapons of speech as available as, perhaps more available than, any ; for they are certainly weapons which lie on the side of the more simply human. Perhaps, as in the case of satire, we gain power over men as we remove from the regions of the abstract. Even imagination is most powerful in the pulpit, not when it ascends into the heights and heavens of unrealized poetry, but when it descends rather into the household and the shop ; and this is its most legitimate realm.

No one can doubt that humour may be purified, and its judicious use reined and guided, by piety, tenderness, and taste, and may do more to bring truth near to the hearts of the multitudes than any other element of speech. And it is singular that, so rich as our language is in humour, in the pulpit it has so seldom been employed ; nay, it has become so rare that it has also become distasteful, and he who uses it has to calculate on a fair share of unpopularity with his brethren in the ministry, and with others too, for his condescension to the popular infirmity of a smile, even if we stop short by many degrees of the more flagrant heresy of a laugh.

Laughter has been a great preacher ; and wonder-

ful has been its power ; it has been one of the Divine moral forces employed to shatter bad things , in how many ages it has appeared to serve the cause of truth ! We will not think of Molière or Cervantes, but think of Ulrich von Hutten and the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, that mighty catapult against Rome which aided the work of Luther ; think of Pascal's Provincial Letters, which made Jesuitism to reel and tremble. Do not the Bigelow letters illustrate how, when some great work is to be done for man, the wit is generally found to step forward and to arouse a laugh, as fatal as a seraph's sword ; and is it to be supposed that a power like this has no place in the pulpit against evil things, either in the errors of the mind, or the vices of life ?

We have spoken of *wit*, *humour*, and *drollery* ; their methods are different, it is true ; *wit* is intellectual, *humour* is emotional, *drollery* is sensational. *Wit* raises the laugh at you, *humour* laughs with you, *drollery* mixes the two boisterously. *Wit* is cultured, *humour* is human, *drollery* is coarse, careless, and often ignorant. *Wit* is usually serious, bold, and stately, *humour* unbends in *bonhomie* and in cheerfulness, but *drollery* is never satisfied unless you roar. *Wit* sees, *humour* feels, *drollery* takes liberties ! Rowland Hill's was a truly consecrated and great life, but he really had much of the pulpit droll. Speaking once to a student for the ministry, he comically said, "The Gospel is a good milch cow ; she always gives plenty of milk and of the best quality. I never write my sermons ; I always trust to the Gospel ; I just give a pull at *justification*, then a plug at *adoption*, and afterwards

a tilt at *sanctification*, and so on, one way or another, till I have filled my pail with Gospel milk. You do the same, young man!" There was a lecture on homiletics for a student!

The stories of humour and drollery belong mostly to the age of the primeval preachers. Wonderful accounts we read of them, and their achievements on the great continent of the United States; in the lives of bishops, not addressed as My Lord; wearing no episcopal title or dignity; having no splendid palace, no magnificent cathedral, no snug diocese, no princely income, only a mighty instinct for souls; men like Bishop Asbury, separating themselves from all the comforts and conveniences of life for sixty dollars a year, with a travelling equipage, not of a coach and four, but of saddle bags and one horse, plunging into the wilderness to seek for lost sheep, bent on saving souls; preaching in barns, on stumps of trees, in log huts, in illimitable woods, in the houseless forests, by blazed trees in deep prairies, floundering through swamps, swimming vast rivers, drenched by pitiless rains, scorched by suns, bitten by frosts and driving snows. From one of these places they wrote for a good preacher—"Be sure and send us a good swimmer!"—and when wonder was expressed what this could mean, it turned out that the district was full of bridgeless torrents and streams, and the last minister was drowned because he could not swim. Sometimes the travelling preacher, or bishop, found himself among hostile Indians in the solitude of the forest; he knew their track and trail; at night he heard their yell, and found himself in the neighbourhood of their camp-

fire and the crack of the Indian rifle. Forgive them their drollery ; they loved their Master, and they loved the work.* The intrepid and heroic preacher urged his way over mountains, and through valleys, stirring the community, wherever he came, with hymn and sermon ; reaching the villages and little settlements dotting the country, amidst extensive wildernesses, for the most part the undisturbed abode of the wolf and the panther. Neither the cold, nor storms of winter, nor the abuse he received from wicked men, could weaken his energy or impede his progress. If the horse were not in the way, then often the saddle-bags had to be carried over the shoulder, and he travelled on foot. Sometimes there were no saddle-bags. "George," said Bishop Asbury to George Roberts, "George, where are your clothes?" "Bishop, they are on my back. On receiving my appointment at your hand, sir, I am not compelled to return to my circuit for my clothes, but I am ready, at a moment's warning, to go whithersoever you direct." His son, Dr. Roberts, says: "I have in my possession the needle and thread case which were his constant companions. If his clothes, from any unexpected cause, needed attention, he was in the habit of turning aside into some retired spot for the purpose of taking them off and mending them." In the lives of Romish saints, such as St. Francis or St. Dominic, these would be thought most picturesque and wonderful relics.

Sometimes the preacher, in the depth of the prairie, came upon a band of white heathen. Thus

* See an interesting article, "Methodist Clerical Biography," *North American Review*, No. 191, 1862.

Richard Nolley, one of these good and great men, discovered the track of an emigrant family, and followed it. "What," said the man who was leading it into the wilderness, "a Methodist preacher! I quit Virginia to be out of the way of them, but in my settlement in Georgia, I thought I should be beyond *their* reach. *There* they were, and they got my wife and daughter into their church. Then I come here to Chocktaw corner, find a good piece of land, feel sure that I shall have some peace from the preachers, and here is one before I've unloaded my waggon!" "My friend," said Nolley, "if you go to heaven, you'll find Methodist preachers there ; and if you go to hell, I'm afraid you'll find some there ; and you see how it is in this world. I'd advise you to come to terms with God, and then you'll be at peace with us." Sometimes they died in the wilderness, and "no man knew the place of their sepulchre." Months, and sometimes years, elapsed before it was known they had gone to their reward. These men have been called the graduates of Brush College, Fellows of Swamp University. "How is it you have no Doctors of Divinity ?" said one to fine old Jacob Kruber, a preacher of this order. "Our divinity is not sick, and does not need doctoring," said the old man. A witty, satirical old creature this Kruber, able, learned, sarcastic, and eloquent. He lived during the days of the Revolution in America, and being called on to pray on some great public occasion, he delivered himself of the following petition : "O Lord, have mercy on the sovereigns of Europe ; convert their souls ; give them short lives and happy deaths ; take them to

heaven, and let us have no more of them." Sometimes the biter got bitten. When he lived at Lewiston he came frequently into contact with a Romish priest, not much behind him in the use of edged tools. He met the priest one day, not, as usual, on horseback, but trudging on foot: said Kruber, "Where's your horse? why don't you ride?" "Oh," said the other, rather testily, "the beast's dead!" "Dead! well, I suppose he is in purgatory?" "Nay, the wretched creature turned Methodist just before he died, and went straight to hell."

Old Kruber was greatly averse to read sermons—for even in those days there were readers of sermons in the pulpit. Once a youthful Congregational minister read before him; Jacob also had to follow the young man in preaching, and it was expected he would give the young brother a thrust for the use of his notes. He finished, however, without saying a word that looked towards the manuscript; but, in his concluding prayer, he uttered these strange petitions:—"Lord, bless the man who has read to us to-day; let his heart be as soft as his head, and then he will do us some good." "How do you make your preachers?" was once said to one of these fine old preachers of the woods. "Why, we old ones tell the young ones all we know, and they try to tell the people all they can, and they keep on trying *till* they can; that's our college." One was asked, "Do you belong to the standing order?" "No," he said, "I belong to the kneeling order."* They were sharp men. One day, while Dr. Bostwick was riding

* "The Life of Jacob Kruber." By W. P. Strickland. New York, 1866.

along on the well-known Methodist horse, a man rode up, insolently laid his hand on the Doctor's bridle, and said : "I would as soon ride the devil as ride this horse." "Oh !" said Bostwick, "how it would look to see a child riding his own father !" The man put spurs to his own steed, and, without a word, galloped away.

There was Billy Hibbard, shrewd, powerful in his dealings with the souls of men, but a mighty Arminian. "Brother Hibbard," said a Calvinistic minister to him one day, "you hurt my feelings in preaching yesterday." "Why, brother, how did I do that ?" He referred him to some doctrinal remark in his discourse. "Oh !" said Hibbard, "I'm sorry you took that, I meant that for the devil, and you stepped in and took it yourself ; don't get between me and the devil, brother, and you won't get your feelings hurt." Like our own famous Dawson, he would scarcely be known by the more elegant and euphonious name of William : when Bishop Asbury was presiding at the roll-call of the Conference, he objected to answering to that name, insisting that his name was *Billy*. "Why, Brother Hibbard," said Asbury, "Billy is a little boy's name !" "Yes, Bishop," he replied, "and I was a little boy when my father gave it me."

These men had few books save the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and a few such, in their saddle-bags, formed their whole library ; yet some became great scholars and masterly divines. The open pages of the book of Nature were before them, and in keen encounters with men they learned a thousand things hidden from ordinary eyes ; and thus was trained a

healthful body, a well-developed muscular system, large, strong lungs ; a vigorous constitution, a workshop and dwelling-place for a vigorous mind. How a man could become a strong preacher and thinker while ranging those mighty solitudes, sleeping in small apartments containing all the family, and such domestic animals as shared a back-woodsman's fireside, seems wonderful. They suffered many persecutions. They had not much to say of moral beauty, necessary relations, *à priori* and *à posteriori* volitions, and intellectual processes, and active powers ; but it is said, and we believe it, they talked of sin so as to make the flesh creep, and the hair stand on end ; and they talked of the love of the Saviour, and the freedom of His grace, so as to make the heart rejoice, and tears come to the eyes. Their intellectual heraldry was not in their armour, but in their muscle, they were not educated to a suppression of their instincts, nor formalised to a slavery of metaphysics. Certainly, they would not have deserved the censure pronounced upon a florid metaphysical preacher—of whom his people, during the week, saw nothing,—that “on six days of the week he was invisible, and on the seventh he was incomprehensible ;” and they might have reversed the remark of the bishop to the young man who applied to him for ordination : “I do not forbid you to preach, but both Nature and Grace do.” Such instances seem to give a sanctity to humour, even when found in the preacher. Indeed, any minister may be sure that his successful speech will depend greatly upon his ability to use this ; for it is humour which is the great detective in character ; it distinguishes the

shades of minds ; and hearty humour also has a keen eye for the frailties and failings, the sins and infirmities, the lesser or the larger sorrows, and the lighter or the weightier joys of the whole human family. We have often said that a man may as well preach without humanity as without humour, but then perhaps most men do preach without humanity ; they find their truth, and dissect off all its human relations, and hold it up, a mere piece of curious theologic osteology, to the eye.

In the pulpit any man who does not aim to lift his audience out of the region of every-day life, out of the region of sorrow and of sin, out of the region of doubt and trembling ; the preacher who does not perpetually aim to influence the mind from higher regions, had better, for his own sake, hold his peace ; if that guiding thought—which is only what the essayists and reviewers would call the ideological way of speaking of the glory of God, as the reviewers' chief end—if that commanded all the faculties and powers of the preacher it would balance all his efforts. Truest humour is tenderness ; coarseness is always synonymous with hardness ; a gross, overflowing, sensual nature may say a multitude of clever, shrewd, laughable things, but not for a moment merit the character of the humorist ; they may be just the luxuriant outgrowth of a hot tropical climate ; that wilderness of rank luxuriance does not delight us, it is the nestling ground of very dangerous things ; the very beauty needs to be educated in a less voluptuous soil. Such productions may be wonderful, but scarcely beautiful. Such is the coarseness with which the old pulpit

abounded ; hardness and blasphemy are characteristics of many of the sermons of the old times.*

Yet this is not so objectionable as many other styles of preaching to which we may yet have occasion to refer.

Our Billy Dawson, of Leeds, has a great fame, and somewhat resembling that of these American worthies ; he used to say, “ I am treated as a bishop sometimes, and sometimes as an apostle ; as a bishop I have a large congregation, and entertain-

* No doubt, in very rude and primitive times, and over very rough and ragged congregations, this weapon even may be used, and not in vain. Mr. Milburn gives us an account of an old American preacher of the backwood districts in the days of the Saddle Bag :—

“ Take the following as a specimen of their predilections. It was a discourse delivered by the Rev. James Axley, familiarly known as ‘Old Jimmy,’ a renowned and redoubtable preacher of East Tennessee. It was related by Hugh L. White, for many years a distinguished judge in that State, and afterwards a conspicuous member of the Federal Senate.

“ It was noised through the town of Jonesborough that Mr. Axley would hold forth on the morning of the ensuing Sabbath. The famous divine was a great favourite—with none more than with Judge White. At the appointed hour the judge, in company with a large congregation, was in attendance at the house of prayer. All were hushed in expectation. Mr. Axley entered, but with him a clerical brother, who was ‘put up’ to preach. The congregation was composed of a border population ; they were disappointed ; this was not the man they had come to hear, consequently there was a good deal of misbehaviour. The discourse was ended, and Mr. Axley rose. It is a custom in the new country when two or more preachers are present, for each of them to have something to say. The people opine that it is a great waste of time to come a long distance and be put off with a short service. I have gone into church at eight o’clock in the morning, and have not come out again until five o’clock in the afternoon. Short administrations are the growth of thicker settlements.

“ Mr. Axley stood silently surveying the congregation until every one was riveted. He then began :—

“ ‘ It may be a very painful duty, but it is a very solemn

ment at the great house ; after the sermon, a costly table loaded with every delicacy ; and, at night, the lady of the house conducts me to a splendid room ; but, as an apostle, I find myself in rough quarters, a shake-down straw mattress, a basin of oatmeal, and thankful for that,—that is an apostle's fare ; but then, the apostle takes the highest rank among Christian workers."

Almost every age has had men whose freedom of speech and behaviour has enlarged the store of

one, for a minister of the Gospel to reprove vice, misconduct, and sin, whenever and wherever he sees it. But especially is this his duty on Sunday and at church. This is a duty I am now about to attend to.

" 'And now,' continued the reverend speaker, pointing with his long finger in the direction indicated, 'that man sitting out yonder behind the door, who got up and went out while the brother was preaching, stayed out as long as he wanted to, got his boots full of mud, came back and stamped the mud off at the door, making all the noise he could, on purpose to disturb the attention of the congregation, and then took his seat ; that man thinks I mean him. No wonder he does. It doesn't look as if he had been raised in the white settlements, does it, to behave that way at meeting ? Now, my friend, I'd advise you to learn better manners before you come to church next time.—*But I don't mean him.*

" 'And now,' again pointing at his mark, 'that little girl sitting there, about half-way of the house—I should judge her to be about sixteen years old—that's her with the artificial flowers on the outside of her bonnet, and the inside of her bonnet ; she has a breast-pin on, too' (they were very severe upon all superfluities of dress), 'she that was giggling and chattering all the time the brother was preaching, so that even the old sisters in the neighbourhood couldn't hear what he was saying, though they tried to. She thinks I mean her. I'm sorry from the bottom of my heart for any parents that have raised a girl to her time of day, and haven't taught her how to behave when she comes to church. Little girl, you have disgraced your parents as well as yourself. Behave better next time, won't you ?—*But I don't mean her.*'

" Directing his finger to another aim, he said, 'That man sitting there, that looks as bright and pert as if he never was

pulpit anecdote. But we have before us volumes of instances of mere pulpit drollery and coarseness, in which preaching, and even prayer, seem to shake hands with, and say, "Hail fellow! well met;" to blasphemy. Such was that greatest of all pulpit drolls and oddities, Abraham Sancta Clara, who, for twenty years, filled the high position of imperial court preacher to Leopold the First; but he has been called, and we should say very appropriately, "the clerical Zany." Yet he is said to have had a

asleep in his life, and never expected to be, but that just as soon as the brother took his text, laid his head down on the back of the seat in front of him, went sound asleep, slept the whole time, and snored; that man thinks I mean him. My friend, don't you know the church ain't the place to sleep? If you needed rest, why didn't you stay at home, take off your clothes, and go to bed? that's the place to sleep, not church. The next time you have a chance to hear a sermon, I advise you to keep awake.—*But I don't mean him.*' Thus did he proceed, pointing out every man, woman, and child, who had in the slightest deviated from a befitting line of conduct; characterising the misdemeanour, and reading sharp lessons of rebuke.

"Judge White was all this time sitting at the end of the front seat, just under the speaker, enjoying the old gentleman's disquisition to the last degree; twisting his neck around, to note if the audience relished the 'down-comings' as much as he did; rubbing his hands, smiling, chuckling inwardly. Between his teeth and cheek was a monstrous quid of tobacco, which, the better he was pleased, the more he chewed; the more he chewed, the more he spat, and behold, the floor bore witness to the results. At length, the old gentleman, straightening himself up to his full height, continued, with great gravity:—

"'And now I reckon you want to know who I do mean. I mean that dirty, nasty, filthy tobacco-chewer, sitting on the end of that front seat'—his finger, meanwhile, pointing true as the needle to the pole—'see what he has been about! Look at those puddles on the floor; a frog wouldn't get into them; think of the tails of the sisters' dresses being dragged through that muck.' The crest-fallen judge averred that he never chewed any more tobacco in church."

genuine enthusiasm for religion and virtue ; he had a mighty mastery of language, a very animated delivery, and an excoriating satire ; but his humour was of the broadest description, and sometimes most irreverent.

What a droll and almost disgraceful illustration we have in his sermon on the Prodigal Son !

“ From what place he took his title (seeing he was a nobleman), has not yet been discovered ; but I believe it was *Maidsberg* or *Womenham*. What was the device in his coat of arms, no one has described ; but I believe it was a sow’s stomach in a field *verd*.

“ This chap travelled with well-larded purse through various countries and provinces, and returned no better but rather worse. So it often happens still, that many a noble youth has his travels changed to travails. Not seldom also, he goes forth a good German and returns a bad *Herman*. What honour or credit is it to the noble river Danube that it travels through different lands, through Suabia, Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, and at last unites with a sow ? The pious Jacob saw, in his journey, a ladder to heaven ; but alas ! many of our Quality find, in their journeys, a ladder into hell. If, nowadays, a man travel not, he is called a Jack-in-the-corner, and one who has set up his rest behind the stove. But tell me, dear half-Germans ! (for whole Germans ye have long ceased to be), is it not true ? Ye send your sons out that they may learn strange vices at great cost in stranger-lands, when, with far less expense, they might be acquiring virtues at home. They return with no more point to them than they went out with, except that they bring home some new fashion of *point-lace*. They return no more gallant, unless it be that gallant comes from the French *galant*. They return more splendidly clad, but good habits were better than to be finely habited. New-

fashioned hats, new-fashioned periwigs, new-fashioned collars, new-fashioned coats, new-fashioned breeches, new-fashioned hose, new-fashioned shoes, new-fashioned ribbons, new-fashioned buttons,—also new-fashioned consciences creep into our beloved Germany through your travels. Your fool's frocks change too with every moon; and soon the tailors will have to establish a university, and take Doctor's degrees, and afterwards bear the title of Right-reverend Doctors of fashion.

"If I had all the new fashions of coats for four-and-twenty years, I would almost make a curtain before the sun with them, so that men should go about with lanterns in the daytime. At least, I would undertake to hide all Turkey with them, so that the Constantinopolitans should think their Mahomed was playing blind-the-cat with them. An old witch, at the request of King Saul, called the prophet Samuel from the dead, that he might know the result of his arms. It will soon come to pass, that people will want to call from the dead the identical tailor and master who made the beautiful Esther's garment, when she was so well-pleasing in the eyes of Ahasuerus.

"So the prodigal son learned but little good in foreign lands. His doing was wooing; his thinking was drinking; his Latin was *Proficiat*; his Italian, *Brindisi*; his Bohemian, *Sasdravi*; his German, *Gesegncts Gott*. In one word, he was a goodly fellow always mellow, a vagrant, a *bacchant*, an *amant*, a *turbant*, a *distillant*, etc. Now he had wasted his substance in foreign provinces, and torn his conscience to tatters as well as his clothes. He might, with truth, have said to his father what the brothers of Joseph said, without truth, to Jacob when they showed him the bloody coat, '*fera pessima*,' etc., "an evil beast hath devoured him." An evil beast devoured the prodigal son; an evil beast, the golden eagle, an evil beast, the golden griffin, an evil beast, the golden buck, an evil beast, the golden bear. These tavern-beasts reduced the youngster to that condition

that his breeches were as transparent as a fisherman's net, his stomach shrunk together like an empty bladder, and the mirror of his misery was to be seen on the sleeve of his dirty doublet, etc. And now when the scamp had got sick of the swine-diet, more wholesome thoughts came into his mind, and he would go straight home to his old father and seek a favourable hearing at his feet ; in which he succeeded according to his wish. And his own father fell quite lovingly on the neck of the bad *vocativo*, for which a rope would have been fitter. Yea, he was introduced with special joy and jubilee into the paternal dwelling, sudden preparations were made for a feast, kitchen and cellar were put in requisition, and the best and fattest calf must be killed in a hurry and cooked and roasted. Away with the rags and tatters ! and hurrah for the velvet coat and the prinked-up hat and a gold ring ! Bring on your fiddlers ! *allegro !*"

But, as we have said, coarseness is usually synonymous with hardness, while genuine humour is always in alliance with tenderness. Drollery, we have said already, is usually wit, or humour, vulgarised on ignorant lips, and made palatable and acceptable to the ignorant and the vulgar. The popular friar preachers and the hedge priests of the Middle Ages, who took mightily with the vulgar, were very much of this stamp. Here is a choice extract from one Père Guérin, preaching, apparently, to one Theodore Viaud, in 1625, who, for writing a book reflecting on the immorality of the monks, was condemned to be burned with his book. "Cursed," howled the preacher, "be the spirit which dictated such thoughts ; cursed be the hand which wrote them ! Woe to the publisher who had them printed, woe to those who read them ! Woe to those who ever made the

author's acquaintance! But, blessed be Monsieur Le Premier Président; blessed be Monsieur le Procureur Général, who have purged our Paris of this plague. You are the originator of the plague in this great city. I would say, after the Rev. Father Garasse, you are a scoundrel, a great calf; but no, shall I call you a calf? Veal is good when boiled, veal is good when roasted, calf skin is good for binding books; but yours, miscreant, is only fit to be well grilled, and that it will be to-morrow. You have raised a laugh at monks, and now we monks will raise a laugh at you."

The history of the pulpit of the dark and middle ages is full of these outrages on decency and taste. One of the more innocent of these droll oddities was Meffreth, a preacher full of ingenuity and allegory, and some of his allegories sufficiently strange. Thus, from the text, "Here we have no continuing city," he compares this world of ours to the weed-covered back of a large whale, which a traveller, navigating the seas, mistook for a pleasant and green island, and did not discover his mistake until he began to drive the stakes of his habitation into the creature, which he had mistaken for an abiding dwelling-place. It is, indeed, a droll image, but not altogether inapt, unjust, or uninstructive.

It is not easy to limit and determine the definition of pulpit eccentricity; in some sense, every greatly eminent preacher must be eccentric; he moves in an elliptic, rather than in a circular sphere; he excites attention by being irregular, and passing beyond the ordinary orbit or groove; in this sense, the richest and most sustained order of eloquence

may be spoken of as eccentric. But humour, the possession of humour, and the use of it in the pulpit, may be so wielded and employed as scarcely to fall beneath the denomination of eccentricity. When good sense and good taste combine with homely cheerfulness on the lips of devout genius, we are very likely to have some pleasant and instructive strokes of humour. "God," said an old Scotch Divine, quoted by that perfect pulpit master, William Jay, "God had but one only begotten Son, and He made a preacher of Him;" and the truth of the remark may surely atone for its homeliness. William Jay frequently employed an easy, happy humour, yet he never passed beyond the regions of good taste and good sense. For example, he imparted to a large congregation a rich sense of enjoyment in preaching from the story of Micah, the priest-maker. After mentioning the text, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good seeing that I have a Levite to my priest," he said: "Let us enter into this story. Here is an old woman, very covetous, and yet very religious in her way. She had saved up eleven hundred shekels of silver, and hid them, but Micah, her son, soon finds and seizes the treasure (for there are children who are neither ashamed nor afraid to steal from their parents), upon which the old woman falls into a passion, and not only raves but curses. Her imprecating the Divine vengeance upon the head of the thief terrified Micah; he confessed the roguery, and restored the money. This threw her into an ecstacy of pleasure, so that, instead of upbraiding him, she exclaims, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son!' declaring at the same

time she intended the whole sum for himself. 'I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand, for my son to make a graven image and a molten image.' The property, however, though wholly pledged, was too precious, on recovery, to be wholly parted with. She, therefore, keeps nine hundred shekels, and squeezes out only two for the sacred service; these she gave to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image, and they were in the house of Micah. Thus a species of idolatry entered into the family, and from this family spread through the whole tribe of Dan. Then, by-and-bye, a strolling Levite, one who had gone abroad in search of employment and promotion, in his vagabond rambles comes to Mount Ephraim, and to the house of Micah. He says he is going on until he can find a place where he may sojourn; Micah says to him, 'Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals.' Clothes, and food, and twenty-five shillings a year! No great matter, for the ministry, although always a good calling, is a bad trade. But the Levite was content, and his employer was happy. 'Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.' When Mr. Jay preached this sermon he was in the prime and fulness of his freshness and his strength. Words can never read as they were spoken; but one who heard it has told us how, with perfect good taste, the manner of the preacher brought out, with what amounted to drollery, the covetousness, the cursing and swearing of the old woman, the theft of the son, and his

superstitious fear, culminating at last in an act of idolatry. And all this time they supposed themselves to be very religious, and doing nothing contrary to the spirituality of the Hebrew worship, while they were actually engaged in breaking the most imperative commandments of the moral law. We have cited this instance not merely as an illustration of the possibility, of which Mr. Jay was an eminent example, of retaining in the pulpit perfect good taste with a lively play of humour, and yet not passing into irreverent eccentricity ; but, we shall say further, there is a human life in innumerable Bible stories which can only be elicited, drawn forth, and made instructive by the soul of humour. We will narrow, therefore, our idea of admiration for humour in the pulpit to the men who have felt the freshness and fulness of a glowing human soul, but who were still ardent in their desire to enlighten the minds, to save the souls, and to comfort the hearts of those who heard them. Such men scarcely attempted to restrain their humour, but it was hallowed by the desire to lift the audience out of the region of every-day life, out of the region of sorrow and sin, out of the region of doubt and suffering.

One of the most sanctified and eminently holy men who assumed drollery as, if not his chief, one of his very chief weapons in dealing with sin and sinners, was John Berridge, the good old Vicar of Everton ; he was droll, but it is impossible to pronounce his name in any other manner than that of reverence ; or, shall we modify the estimate, and say that it was the manner,—it was the play of the mouth, and that most impudent-looking nose, which gave effect to

strokes of wit and humour, and which, on his lips, perhaps became as really sacred a thing—if the expression be permitted—as on those of any man gifted with such a dangerous faculty. He wrote his own epitaph, and here it is, itself, as plainly as any word he ever wrote, revealing what manner of man the quaint but really earnest old vicar of Everton was. We read it ourselves, some time since, in Everton churchyard, whither we walked from Potton, to realize the spot where the old vicar wrought out the work of his quietly busy and honourably amusing career; we thought, at any rate, that he had contrived to preach a sermon on his tombstone :

Here lie
The earthly remains of
JOHN BERRIDGE,
Late Vicar of Everton,
And an itinerant servant of Jesus Christ,
Who loved his Master and His work,
And, after running on His errands many years,
Was called to wait on Him above.

READER,

Art thou born again?

No Salvation without New-Birth!

I was born in Sin, February, 1716.

Remained ignorant of my fallen state till 1730.

Lived proudly on Faith and Works for Salvation till 1754.

Admitted to Everton Vicarage, 1755.

Fled to Jesus alone for Refuge, 1756.

Fell asleep in Christ, January 22nd, 1793.

But the words of honest John Berridge, if they were droll, were seasoned with the salt of a good

conversation, which has often been wanting to the words of those who have indulged themselves as he did ; thus he describes the doctrine of the contingency of the promise of the grace of eternal life under the image of

SERGEANT IF.

“ The doctrine of perseverance affords a stable prop to upright minds, yet lends no wanton cloak to corrupt hearts. It brings a cordial to revive the faint, and keeps a guard to check the foward. The *guard* attending on this doctrine is Sergeant If ; low in stature, but lofty in significance ; a very valiant guard, though a monosyllable. Kind notice has been taken of the Sergeant by Jesus Christ and His apostles ; and much respect is due unto him, from all the Lord’s recruiting officers, and every soldier in His army.

“ Pray listen to the Sergeant’s speech :—‘ If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ’ (John viii. 31). ‘ If ye do these things ye shall never fall ’ (2 Peter i. 10). ‘ If what ye have heard shall abide in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father ’ (1 John ii. 24). ‘ We are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold fast unto the end ’ (Heb. iii. 14). ‘ Whoso looketh and continueth (that is, IF he that looketh does continue) in the perfect law of liberty, that man shall be blessed in his deed ’ (James i. 25).

“ Yet take notice, Sir, that Sergeant IF is not of Jewish, but of Christian parentage ; not sprung from Levi, though a son of Abraham ; no sentinel of Moses, but a watchman for the camp of Jesus.”

But, again, drollery in the pulpit ! Artemus Ward in the pulpit ! surely there is something shocking and repulsive in the idea. Surely it is not

so that we can conceive the Master of preachers ever preaching. Surely not so did the apostles preach. Not so ever could they preach who lived on the confines of eternity, and there should the preacher ever find the home of his thought and his heart ; to permit the undisciplined fancy to mount a grotesque idea, and set forth prancing and curveting, almost to the astonishment and laughter of an audience, whose lowest nature will no doubt be tickled, while the highest intentions of the pulpit are thus entirely kept out of sight. Surely if the preacher who goes into the pulpit to say fine things commits a great sin, not less does he sin who turns the pulpit into a booth, on whose boards he gives forth his queer, extravagant, and droll things, for drollery is satire on the lips of the clown ; it is truth degraded to the party colours of the harlequin, or the buskin of the fool, grinning to make the multitude grin ; yet nature will come out on the lips of men who love to be at the mercy of their own fancies. This also must be said in defence of some of these children of humour, whose lives were nevertheless holy and sanctified, that the droll things abide in the memory of the audience, when the serious things, and even the intentions and lessons of the droll things themselves, are forgotten and pass away.

Such a preacher was Jacob Kruber, of America, to whom we have already referred ; he seemed to riot in the pulpit, and become intoxicated upon the *schnapps* of his own free humour ; perhaps he was the Rowland Hill of his country and his denomination. When in Huntington, U.S., the Universalists— who had become a large body there beneath the

teaching and leadership of a person named Crow, and who were influenced by the flattering doctrine, that men and women dying unconverted in this world would be converted in the next—came with their preacher, in thronging multitudes, to hear him and to mock him. After a strong assault upon the doctrine itself, Kruber exclaimed, “Now, any man who could conceive such a thing must be born in a crow’s nest, and he must have been brought up in a crow’s nest, as he never could get up any higher. He must have been fed on dry bones, without any meat on them, or marrow in them. Lord, stir up this crow’s nest ! Lord ! the crow is a very ugly bird ; it is all black,—make it white. It has a very harsh croaking noise—Lord, put a new song in its mouth, even praise to our God. Lord, give it wings, that it may fly away to the third heaven, and be converted ;” and we read that such poor drollery shot poor Crow. Kruber, like most of these droll men, had as much horror of anything graceful in a sermon as he had of anything attractive and beautiful in a dress, and he took real pleasure in trying how rough and uncouth he could be in his expressions in the pulpit. The Latter Day Saints told him their meat was too strong for him ; he said, “Yes, it is very strong ! it is tainted ; go and bury it, that it may not poison any person.” Then he suggested a change of two words in the designation of their sect, instead of “day,” say “night” ! and instead of “saints,” say “owls.” Cautioning against the reliance on conversion, however clear and satisfactory, instead of aiming at daily growth in grace, he exclaimed, “Some people believe if you are once converted,

you are just as safe as if already in heaven—and the door shut, and *the key lost*." Perhaps few of our readers have seen, or will have any objection to read, his satire upon fashionable preachers, and their modes of meeting and helping, in cases of conversion.

He chose for his subject the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Ananias, who resided at Damascus, was made to represent the velvet-lipped modern preacher. He thus introduced the subject :—

"A great many years ago a bold blasphemer was smitten by conviction when he was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians. He was taken to Damascus in great distress. Ananias, after hearing of the concern of mind under which Paul was labouring, started out to find him. It seems that he was stopping at the house of a gentleman of the name of Judas—not Judas Iscariot, for that person had been dead several years. The residence of this gentleman was in the street which was called Straight. I suppose it was the main street, or Broadway of the city, and hence it was not difficult to find. Arriving at the mansion, he rang the bell, and soon a servant made her appearance. He addressed her thus: 'Is the gentleman of the house, Mr. Judas, within?' 'Yes, sir,' responded the servant, 'he is at home.' Taking out a glazed, gilt-edged card, on which was printed, Rev. Mr. Ananias, he handed it to the servant and said: 'Take this card to him quickly.' Taking a seat, with his hat, cane, and gloves in his left hand, his right being employed in arranging his classical curls so as to present as much of an intellectual air as possible, he awaited an answer. Presently Mr. Judas makes his appearance, whereupon Mr. Ananias rises, and making a graceful bow, says: 'Have I the honour to address Mr. Judas, the gentleman of the house?' 'That is my name, sir; please be

seated.' 'I have called, Mr. Judas, to inquire if a gentleman by the name of Mr. Saul, a legate of the high priest at Jerusalem, is a guest at your house?' 'Yes, sir; Mr. Saul is in his chamber, in very great distress and trouble of mind. He was brought here yesterday, having fallen from his horse a few miles from the city on the Jerusalem-road.' 'Oh! I am very sorry to hear of so painful an accident. I hope he is not dangerously wounded.' 'No, sir, I think not, though the fall has affected his sight very much, and he complains considerably and prays a good deal.' 'Well, I am very sorry; but that is not very strange, as I believe he belongs to that sect of the Jews called Pharisees, who make much of praying. How long since he received this fall, Mr. Judas?' 'About three days since, and all the time he has not taken any refreshment or rest.' 'Indeed! you don't say so! he must be seriously hurt. May I be permitted to see Mr. Saul?' 'I will ascertain his pleasure, Mr. Ananias, and let you know if you can have an interview.' After being gone a short time Mr. Judas returns, and says: 'Mr. Saul will be much pleased to see you.' When he is ushered into his presence Saul is reclining on his couch in a room partially darkened. Approaching him, Ananias says: 'How do you do, Mr. Saul? I understood you had done our city the honour of a visit. Hope you had a pleasant journey. How did you leave all the friends at Jerusalem? How did you leave the high priest? We have very fine weather, Mr. Saul. I thought I would call and pay my respects to you, as I was anxious to have some conversation with you on theological subjects. I am extremely sorry to hear of the accident that happened to you in visiting our city, and hope you will soon recover from your indisposition.'"

No man sinned more in this way than the celebrated Rowland Hill. He also was a droll in the pulpit. We have heard him indulging in ex-

cursions, in his extreme old age, which we suppose would scarcely be tolerated now ; and many of the anecdotes recorded of him are alike intolerable to good sense, good taste, and Christian feeling. Rambbling and digressive, he seemed to be at the mercy of his humour, and to follow it whithersoever it led him.

On one occasion, he said :—

“ The mere professor reminds me of a sow that I saw two hours ago luxuriating in her sty when almost over head and ears in the mire. Now, suppose any of you were to take Bess (the sow) and wash her, and suppose after having dressed her in a silk gown, and put a smart cap upon her head, you were to take her into any of your parlours, and were to set her down to tea in company, she might look very demure for a time, and might not give even a single grunt ; but you would observe that she occasionally gave a sly look towards the door, which showed that she felt herself in an uncomfortable position ; and the moment she perceived that the door was open she would give another proof of the fact by running out of the room as fast as she could. Follow the sow, with her silk gown and her fancy cap, and in a few seconds you will find that she has returned to her sty and is again wallowing in the mire. Just so it is with the unrenewed man ; sin is his element ; and though he may be induced from a variety of motives to put on at times a show of religion, you will easily perceive that he feels himself to be under unpleasant restraints, and that he will return to his sins whenever an opportunity of doing so, unknown to his acquaintances, presents itself to him.”

But this is not the whole of Rowland Hill ; his beauty and true excellence are forgotten, and only the frequent coarsenesses are now remembered,

although Robert Hall, we understand, hyperbolically said of him, "No man has ever drawn, since the days of our Saviour, such sublime images from nature; here Mr. Hill excels every other man." He had a rapid succession of many-coloured and many-shaped ideas, and of their singularity even Mr. Edwin Sydney, his nephew and biographer, gives many illustrations. This was remarkable in his *collection sermons*. "There is," he exclaimed once, "a perpetual frost in the pockets of some wealthy people; as soon as they put their hands into them, they are frozen and unable to draw out their purses. Had I my way, I would hang all misers, but the reverse of the common mode; I would hang them up by the heels, that their money might run out of their pockets, and make a famous scramble for you to pick up and put in the plate." On a wet day, when a number of persons took shelter in his chapel during a heavy shower, while he was in the pulpit, he said, "Many people are greatly blamed for making their religion a *cloak*; but I do not think those are much better who make it an *umbrella*." When he was told he did not preach to the elect—upon an early opportunity, in the pulpit, he said, "I don't know them, or I would preach to them. Have the goodness to mark them with a bit of chalk, and then I'll talk to them." "I don't like those mighty fine preachers," he said, "who so beautifully round off all their sentences that they are sure to roll off the sinner's conscience." "Never mind breaking grammar," he said to his excellent co-pastor, Theophilus Jones, "if the Lord enables you to break the poor sinner's heart." A strange illustration he

gave when he introduced his sermon on the text, “*We are not ignorant of his devices*” :—

“ Many years since I met a drove of pigs in one of the streets of a large town, and to my surprise they were not driven, but quietly followed their leader. This singular fact excited my curiosity ; and I pursued the swine, until they all quietly entered the butchery ; I then asked the man how he succeeded in getting the poor stupid, stubborn pigs so willingly to follow him, when he told me the secret : —He had a basket of beans under his arm ; and kept dropping them as he proceeded, and so secured his object. Ah ! my dear hearers, the devil has got his basket of beans, and he knows how to suit his temptations to every sinner. He drops them by the way ; the poor sinner is thus led captive by the devil at his own will ; and if the grace of God prevent not, he will get him at last into his butchery, and there he will keep him for ever. Oh, it is because ‘we are not ignorant of his devices,’ that we are anxious this evening to guard you against them.”

The illustration is not very elegant, but it would tell on many rude natures ; it was Scriptural, it was human, and true. The remarkable fact about it was that it affected, and became the means of the conversion of a man of culture, an officer, home from Indian service.*

Dean Ramsay tells a story of some old Scottish lady who, while mourning over the moral state of one of her relatives, exclaimed, “Our John swears awfu’ ; and we try to correct him ; but,” she added,

* The writer may be permitted to refer to a series of papers by himself on Rowland Hill in *The Sunday at Home*, for 1877, in which are collected the circumstances of the life, and characteristics of the humour, of this very remarkable preacher.

in a candid and apologetic tone, “nae doubt it is a great set-aff to conversation.” It seems to be even so with pulpit drollery and humour. It is very much condemned, but no doubt it is a great set-off to the pulpit. It has been said, “In every denomination there will occasionally spring up a ‘Tom Bradbury,’ preaching with eccentricity enough, and drollery enough to afflict the Church and to amuse the world. Billy Dawson was one of this stamp.” The writer can know neither the one preacher nor the other to whom he refers. We glanced, as we read this, to the eleven volumes of the sermons of Bradbury—*The Great Mystery of Godliness*, and the *Christus in Cælo*—and felt that some wonderful injustice had been done to his memory ; his wit and humour were like the wit and humour of South, but seem to have been more rich and genial ; they were not consecrated to flatter a corrupt court and triumphant cause, and did not at all mar the ample knowledge, and sound and lofty views of evangelical truth, and copious acquaintance with Scripture by which he delighted his hearers : even his celebrated sermon, “*The Ass and the Serpent*,” contains little that the fastidious of our day could condemn. He hated the Stuarts, and in his sermons he maintained, at once with indignation and humour, *the right of a people to resist tyrants*.

But “Tom Bradbury” has some sins to answer for, even if he deserve to live in the honour and esteem of men to whom civil and religious liberty are blessings. Queen Anne was wont to call him Bold Bradbury. Few persons, it is said, had a greater share in promoting the succession of the

house of Hanover. It is also said, that upon Queen Anne's death, he preached from the text, "Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her, for she is a king's daughter;" it was he who was wont to express his dislike of Dr. Watts's psalms by saying, "Let us have none of Dr. Watts's *whims*." In fact, he was the South of the Nonconformists, but he had incomparably more decency than that disagreeable time-server.

William Dawson may, perhaps, seem to be nearer to the idea of the author of a lampoon called "Punch in the Pulpit," and from which we have quoted above; yet he was a master there, and only disgraceful ignorance can so insult his memory. Dawson seldom indulged in drollery for its own sake; he had immense power over vast audiences. We have many powerful preachers living now, but in the power of self-abandonment we have no speaker like Dawson. He spoke to the people in parables; he sometimes spoke in very bold, to our thought, even in coarse imagery and language; but the world needs preachers such as he was. And the writer we have quoted finds "Punch in the pulpit" during the singing of many hymns. Those exquisitely beautiful hymns, "Alas! and did my Saviour bleed," and that most tender one, "The waves of trouble, how they rise," awaken only his disgust. This is called "queer hymnology." We live indeed in hypercritical times, when such sweet and sacred notes of the Church can be profaned by such a vulgar designation.

There is no doubt plenty of cause for a smart satire upon many of the ways and words of the men

of the pulpit. It is a difficult thing to determine—nothing can determine it but the cultivated and sanctified sense of the preacher—the extent to which humour may be permitted in the pulpit. Some will protest against its use altogether, but the boughs of the old elm tree which once shed its autumn leaves in St. Paul's Churchyard, and which has not been long removed, while preserving to the eye of memory the cross over which it waved, where stood the pulpit, once the most celebrated in all England, the Pulpit of St. Paul's Cross, defend the use of it. To what that pulpit was we have no resemblance now; for, indeed, times have altered, and the pulpit work is different; that pulpit was *The Times* newspaper of its day; it was far more, it was the platform, it was the book, the focal lens, the ventilator of public opinion; and not only true things, but humorous things, did that useful sounding-board echo over the multitudes. There Colet, the learned Dean, there Hooker, there the grave and dignified Ridley; and there, too, the most popular preacher of them all, the anecdotal, witty, fable-loving and humorous Latimer, preached. If we did not regret that there is found so little freedom in the pulpit, we should rejoice that, with the multitudes of preachers, there is so little infringement of the bounds of good taste. At the same time it is to be remembered that there is a pedantic "Punch in the pulpit," as well as a frolicsome one, and it is difficult to say which of the two is the more irreverent. Fine sermons, learned sermons, metaphysical sermons, are shocking things. A very old writer has said—

“ Some take a text sublime and fraught with sense,
But quickly fall into impertinence.
On trifles eloquent with great delight.
They flourish out on some strange mystic rite ;
But to subdue the passions, or direct,
And all life’s moral duties, they neglect.
Most preachers err, except the wiser few,
Thinking established doctrines, therefore, true.
Others, too fond of novelty and schemes,
Amuse the world with airy, idle dreams.
Thus too much faith or too presuming wit
Are rocks where bigots or freethinkers split.
’Tis not enough that what you say is true:
To make us feel it, *you* must feel it too,
Show yourself warm, and that will warmth impart
To every hearer’s sympathising heart.”

The style of some preachers is quite as ludicrous as that ridiculed by Pluché in his “ History of the Heavens ” :—

“ A carpenter who understood his trade, and was in tolerable circumstances, had given his son a good education, that is, had made him pass through a course of liberal studies and philosophy. We know no other method. The father dying just as the son had gone through his public disputations, and leaving some undertakings unfinished, the young man took a liking to work, and followed his father’s profession. But he bethought himself of recalling his art to certain principles, and subjecting it to a methodical order. He treated the whole in his head as he had seen his masters treat the art of reasoning. At length he got together a number of journeymen of the trade, and promised to lead them by a new way to the quintessence of carpentry.

“ Our new doctor, after a long preamble on mechanics, which he promised to treat on *by genus and species*, came to the first question, and very seriously examined whether *there was a principle of force in man*. He long discussed the

reasons *pro* and *con*, and at last enabled his disciples, knowingly, and without any apprehension of mistake, to affirm that man was capable of a certain degree of strength, and able to communicate motion, for instance, to an axe, or to a stone, if not too great. He was contented with this modest assertion, being persuaded, that, with this small strength multiplied, he might, towards the end of his treatise, come to transporting the largest pieces of rough marble, and to heaving of mountains. *He next proceeded to examine the place where this force resided*; and after many disputation on the brains, the glandula pinealis, the spirits, and the muscles, he, out of economy, and for brevity's sake, determined that the arm was the chief agent, and the instrument of human strength.

“*In a third paragraph* (for you would have wondered how well he divided and put his matter in order), *the strength* residing in the arm gave him occasion to *examine all the constituent pieces of the arm*, and to make an exact anatomy of it. He made long dissertations on the nerves, muscles, fibres, and descended to the minutest filaments. He multiplied the lengths of the muscles by their breadths, and the product of these by the sum of the fibres. From one calculation to another he came to determine the strength of each degree of tension, and, by means of these determinations, made himself able to fix the strength of percussion. Thus he weighed a cuff, and joining the strength of the fist to the sum of the blow of a hammer, he showed you the exact weight with which this percussion was in equal proportion. *Finally*, to sum up his matters, and for the conveniency of the young carpenters, he reduced this whole into algebraic expressions.

“The author's conclusion on the whole work is, ‘*that not only in point of religion, but also in natural philosophy, we ought to be contented with the certainty of experience, and the simplicity of Revelation.*’”*

* Pluché, “*Hist. of the Heavens*,” vol. ii., b. 4.

In thoughtlessness, in sheer vacant thoughtlessness, some of the effects, equal to the most ridiculous drollery, have their origin; like the escapade of speech heard from the lips of a holy minister by a friend of our own, in describing the happiness of the heavenly state:—Oh, my friends, there *Satan* shall harass you no longer; there the enemy of souls can distress you no more, for there you shall be like *Him*; there you shall see *Him* as He is.” It is to be hoped all his auditors were sufficiently at home in Scripture, to understand the extraordinary juxtaposition of ideas.

One Saturday afternoon, the great Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, received a visit from the Rev. Clement Carnifex, who, at that time, lived at “Enon” near to Salim, because there was much water there. The following dialogue between these two men will afford a still more striking illustration of these impertinent allusions to the devil:—

Clement Carnifex.—“I am come from a great distance to hear you preach to-morrow.”

Robert Robinson.—“Then, brother, you shall preach for me.”

C. C.—“O no, no; I cannot preach in Mr. Robinson’s pulpit.”

R. R.—“Why not? my pulpit is a wooden one; is not yours?”

C. C.—“Yes, sir; but I cannot preach to Mr. Robinson’s people.”

R. R.—“Why not? my people are like other people—some good, some bad—are not yours?”

C. C.—“Yes, sir.”

R. R.—“Well, then, I daresay the sermons last Sunday at home would be very suitable. What were they?”

C. C.—“Why, in the morning I preached from Esther vii. 9—‘Hang him thereon.’”

R. R.—“Very well, brother. You had a good opportunity of showing that the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Did you take it up in that light, brother?”

C. C.—“No, sir ; I considered Haman as the devil, who is always endeavouring to injure the Lord’s people, and would be glad to destroy them.”

R. R.—“Very good, brother : nothing can be more suitable. Here is old Nanfly, the pew-opener at our place ; she can never get to meeting in time, for she says that the devil always finds her something or other to do. Then there is old Farmer Jones, who lives about three miles off. He says that before he has got half way to meeting, the devil tells him that somebody is breaking into his barns, and he is obliged to return. Now, brother, if you could prove that you have hanged the devil, nothing in the world would be more suitable. That will do for the morning. Now, what is the afternoon subject, brother ?”

C. C.—“Why, sir, in the afternoon I preached from 2 Kings xviii. 36, ‘Answer him not.’”

R. R.—“Very well, brother. You have an opportunity of showing not only that the king’s business requires haste, but that it is sometimes good policy not to reveal the secrets of State affairs. Did you handle it that way, brother ?”

C. C.—“No, sir. I endeavoured to show that the devil would be always harassing and distressing the dear people of God ; but the best way was to pay no regard to his temptation. ‘Answer him not a word.’”

R. R.—“Ha ! ha ! brother ; that will never do. Now, in the morning, you see, according to your sermon, you hanged the devil ; that was very fortunate ; but in the afternoon you brought him to life again. At any rate it must be wrong for these two subjects to follow each other.”

But we do not know that any of these strange developments disgust more than those which result in tame feebleness from the absence of earnestness. We have the "laced coat of mere orthodox twaddle;" we have men who stand like cast-iron pumps, and exercise their preaching as a kind of parish-pump faculty; we have somnolence sleeping itself to death; and we have the platitudes uttered, when men, having no voice in their own conscience, fail of course to reach the consciences of others.

We have heard many sermons preached upon the publican and Pharisee; but did you ever hear of that preached in St. Giles-in-the-Fields? "It was sad," said the able and eloquent preacher, "that any of our fellow-creatures should so fall, as to stand in need of such a degrading confession as the publican's; but he besought his hearers to be upon their guard, lest by drawing too favourable a contrast between such outcasts and themselves, they incurred the censure pronounced on that otherwise most amiable character, the Pharisee." And James Haldane mentions, in one of his missionary tours in Scotland, that he heard a minister solemnly warn his people,—and he was a minister of the Scotch Establishment,—against putting any trust, while they continued sinners, in the blood of Christ. "Repent," said he, "become righteous, atone for your sins by probity and virtue, and then, if you please, you may look to that blood, but not before." Widely different all this from the "warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

We need not read the celebrated "Sermons to

Asses.”* We need not go to hear the Friar Gerund,† nor listen to the preacher who took for his text “O,” and said a thousand fine things; nor to that learned and judicious monk, who, preaching upon the servant of the High Priest warming himself, began, “My brethren, see how the evangelist relates, not merely as an historian would—‘he warmed himself,’ but as a philosopher—‘because he was cold.’” The speech outruns the ideas of some preachers, as in the instance, cited by the Wyckhamist, of a missionary, who, describing the horrors of the Caffre war, and its desolating effect on his own estate, and wishing to wind up with a good sonorous cadence, ended in words which certainly were remarkable as the experience of a living man, “*And when I got home to my house I found my children fatherless and my wife a widow.*” We need not go, for the purpose of marking the humours of the pulpit, to that repertory, above all other *répertoires* of pulpit anecdote, Robert Robinson’s edition of “Claude,” unless to note how admirable are his remarks upon vulgarity in the pulpit; and they afford a reason for many of Robinson’s own frequent lapses.

“*Nothing is more necessary than self-denial.* Beside all that self-denial, which belongs to ministers in common with their fellow-Christians, there are exercises of it peculiar to divines, and essential to the discharge of the pastoral office. Visiting and conversing with the poor, and allowing them to

* “*Sermons to Asses, to Doctors of Divinity, to Lords Spiritual, and to Ministers of State.*” By the Rev. James Murray, 1819.

† “*The History of the Famous Preacher, Friar Gerund de Companzas, otherwise Gerund Zotes.*” Translated from the Spanish. In 2 vols. 1772.

come for spiritual advice, are articles of this kind. Can it be imagined, that a man of learning is gratified by illiterate conversation?—That a polite, well-bred man relishes the vulgar, awkward rudeness of clowns? That men, who know the worth of time, and who love study as they love life, can be pleased with interruption and nonsense, and long-winded tales of complaint, which begin, perhaps, in an ale-house fray, and end in a case of conscience? Can they, whose company is courted by accomplished men, who would *pour into their bosoms* of wise and pious conversation *good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over*—can these, I ask, of choice spend half a day in searching for one grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff? Yet he who cannot submit to these things, however qualified for a nobleman's domestic chaplain, or for a dignitary in a rich church, can never make the less splendid but more useful minister of a parish, or pastor of a flock. A poet may give himself airs, toss his haughty head, take snuff, and chant—*Odi profanum vulgus; but the minister of the meek and merciful Jesus must not do so.* He must try to take the *ton* of his poor people, if he would do them real spiritual good. It will be his glory sometimes to be *rude in speech*, to conceal his abilities, to adapt himself to their weaknesses, to prefer Bunyan before Beza, Dodd's sayings and Wright's poems before the casuistry of Hoadley and the poetry of Milton or Young.

Thus, also, some preachers are fond of discoursing on the Book of Leviticus, a book needing a very fine spiritual hand and insight, and capable of yielding glorious teaching; yet the effect is usually bad, because there is no eye for the Divine meaning. Thus a young clergyman hearing a minister preaching on the types, and expounding Leviticus iii. 3—“And he shall offer the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the

two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it he shall take away"—it is said, turned sick at the suggestive pictures. It is a singular chapter in the history of the human mind, the irreverence of reverent men. The shelves of our own library give to us John Stoughton's (not our excellent friend the historian, but the old 1640 man) "Baruch's Sore Gently Opened, and the Salve Skilfully Applied." We have the "Church's Bowel Complaint," "The Snuffers of Divine Love." Then are there not the "Spiritual Mustard Pot to Make the Soul Sneeze with Devotion," "A Pack of Cards to Win Christ," etc., etc.? Looking back upon these things, we almost feel that our age has advanced in reverence as well as in culture.

Yet we wish we had more freedom in the pulpit. There would be more useful results if ministers felt more, and spoke more openly and heartily ; if every man had more his own style. If, in fact, the pulpit could be *less* than it is, it would be *more* than it is ; it overrides far too intolerantly other ministerial duties. We ourselves speak much of it, and yet we long to hear less of it. And then it will do its work better, when its words shall be a flow of kindly, friendly, solemn, cheerful, thoughtful talk : a conversation with people, rather than the sweep of a stately flight above them, talking *to* them—that is in sympathy—rather than talking *at* them. Certainly, in the work of the pulpit, the true preacher makes his own work, and uses, by an instinct deeper than his own knowledge, the kind of method most suited to his nature. Toplady says, "The painter chooses the

materials on which he paints—on wood, on glass, on metals, on ivory, on canvas. Some natural endowments are not high—there the painting is on wood; others on marble, quick sensibility, and poignant feeling; some on glass, very beautiful, but especially dangerous, since by the first stone of penetration they are fractured and broken, and fall from their first love. The earliest ancients painted only in water, like hypocrites: but God paints in oil, accompanying Himself the word by unction and by power."

And when attempts are made either to sneer down the pulpit or to hold it up to ridicule, the response ought to be, that it is really by far the most important means for the education of thought and emotion in the hands of men. It cannot be cared for too much, or guarded too sedulously. It needs indeed to be taken away from the tongue of bigotry and formalism, it needs to be made less a mere amusement and luxury, more of tenderness, experience, teaching—more of humanity in it; and then it will be hailed as one of the most delightful means of cheering the toil of the working man with the love of Jesus, the story of the Cross, and the good news from the far country, inwrought with lessons and pictures of life, homely, powerful, and practical, becoming at once light to the eye and a power to the conscience.

Southee entertains us with a story of a certain Quaker who took a manuscript to Franklin to print and publish. Franklin looked over it, and said to the author that it was somewhat deficient in arrangement. "It's no matter," said the author, "print

any part thou pleasest first." We may almost fear lest the fragmentary words of this chapter may lay us open to a similar laugh. The fault is, perhaps, that all persons live too exclusively on the life of the book, or of the speaker. The man who lives on the orator alone may have his mental and moral life destroyed by a plethora or a spasm, if we may not rather call it a spontaneous combustion. The man, on the contrary, who lives the life of the mere bookman may die of indigestion. There is a danger of being mere bookmen, or else mere hangers-on at public meetings, and frothy lecturings. We educate our thoughts by the book, we enlarge our information by the book, we extend the territory of our imagination by the book ; but we educate our affections by speech, we intensify our impulses by speech, we acquire the grace of manner and the felicity of diction by speech, not merely by speaking, but by hearing. The book is for the head ; from the book we must expect to obtain ideas ; from the book we must gain mental forms ; the book will surround the spirit with all those graceful fictions, those ineffable charms of proverb and parable, which give to the soul the evergreen and the flower, as well as the hardy fruit. Speech will give fire to us, it will give light to us, such light as shines through a vault when the heavens are alive with flame. The bookman becomes a mere cold critic, watchful for the slips of speech ; the mere speaker or auditor becomes careless, save of all that ministers to stirring sensation, by drollery or humour, rhetoric or fancy ; he is careless how it comes.

But we must kindle the torch if we intend to track

our way through the “palpable obscure.” At present our faith is not great, as a whole, either in the book or in speech. And our age is too critical. In these times we seem to have the obstinacy of the dogmatist without his weapon of certainty. That our nature may be perfected, we must permit the river of speech to flow through the ear into the soul, as well as the river of thought to flow through the eye into the soul. By our homage to each we shall find our nature built up and sustained.

But let us remember that there are occasions on which laughter is almost solely, if not solely, the only weapon we can employ ; we can far more readily laugh some bad things out of countenance than we can argue them out of existence ; there is even a kind of drollery which has been employed very efficiently on subjects which can be considered scarcely less than sacred. Shall we greatly offend some of our readers, who, like ourselves, prize all the lessons which modern science and culture present to us, when we say that some of the teachings of modern scientists seem ridiculous and trifling, impertinent and sinful ? May we relate an old anecdote ? It will bear repeating, even if our readers already know it, as an illustration of the way in which drollery does a work sometimes more efficient than logic. A city missionary was preaching in London—he was pressing home the abiding identity and responsibility of the soul ; an infidel, well-known in the neighbourhood, interrupted him ; after the usual flippant manner of such persons, he argued that it was impossible a man could have any responsibilities. “Why,” he

said, "it is a well-known fact that a man is a bundle of atoms, and these are constantly changing, the man is constantly throwing them off; how can a man be responsible for deeds done by another man who is gone, and is now he knows not where; but who forms no part now of his nature?" The missionary was one of these masters of drollery. He said, "I cannot talk with that man; it is a fact that this person, whom you know as a married man, is now living with a woman who is not his wife. Such is the morality of infidelity!" His opponent burst into a rage. "This is the way," said he, "with all these Christians. They cannot foil us in argument, and so they descend to personal abuse. I am a married man. I live with my wife, and I love her, although I was married to her twenty years since; and I defy any one to say a word against my character in that particular." The missionary maintained his ground. "There could be no doubt," he said, "the man was living with a woman who was not his wife. It was true he had married a woman twenty years since; but that woman was no longer in existence. She was composed of atoms which had all resolved themselves into other substances; that woman was a woman no longer." And he, therefore, called on the infidel either to acknowledge that he was really living with a woman who was not his wife, or to acknowledge that, although matter dissolved, something beyond matter remained. The illustration was droll, but it was unanswerable; and the infidel did not make much by that interruption.

We can never forget our impressions when we

heard the first illustrations of sustained humour in the pulpit. We had been accustomed from infancy to the gravity of the old hard-shelled Puritanism, and we were young when we first heard Thomas Binney ; it was a revelation to us to find a fine play of refined cheerfulness glowing over the face, and gleaming in a happy colloquial style along his words. He broke up the stilted style of pulpit eloquence in England. Before Robertson had ascended the pulpit we believe we heard Binney say everything that has given eminence to the sermons of the Brighton preacher, but conjoined in him with a sustained majesty of elevated language and thought, to which Robertson seldom attained. He was a master of the eloquence of smiles and tears, and he wielded satire with that delicacy and refinement of shaft which is always its most fatal power. Forty years since, upon the first appearance of Strauss's "Life of Christ," in a sermon of marvellous power, he replied to the mythical theory in a style of satire which seems to us most overwhelming and irresistible. We were never able, we are still unable to feel any respect for the work of Strauss ; it insults our judgment. That precious theory is only worthy of satire, it is not worth an argument, which represents Christ, our Saviour, only as a spectre, a gliding image along the arcades of the temple, less real than the phantoms of a winter's eve, and to be classed only with the stories of a village beldame, who terrifies her youthful audience with scenes from the graveyard. The history of Christ and Christianity a coruscation of fancy ? To argue with a case

like this would be to insult our own common sense ; of course, it is unanswerable, except by satire, and in this fashion Thomas Binney replied to it. But, perhaps, in future pages we may reprint this, which we will venture to call one of the most splendid pieces of cumulative argument heightening into eloquence, and bound together, all along, by a subtle, delicate, and reserved muscle of satire, in the whole range of modern theology and preaching.

Archbishop Whately took another way of satire, in replying to the same book, in his " Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte," demonstrating, on precisely the same principles, that it was doubtful if Napoleon ever existed, and that it was probable that the battle of Waterloo was never fought at all ! and both are noble illustrations of the work done by the pulpit in the *ad hominem* argument on the lips of satire.

Satire has a keen detective eye, and the sermons of Binney, as we remember them as a youth, were full of these bright but cheerful detective strokes. Thus we heard him once on the early emergence of the evolution theory, upon the appearance of the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation," a work which anticipated the prelections of Mr. Darwin. He said, we might conceive of the man built up by evolution ; but now, when the woman was built up by the same process, and that man is found exactly to answer to that woman, what a wonderful principle of evolution is there, and yet, neither "male nor female created he them" ! Two happy evolutions going on together at the same time and most marvellously meeting.

So then, on the whole, humour chastened, educated, and refined, as it has found, so it may still find a place in pulpit exercises. Humour has the touches that melt, humour animates and cheers, humour is the life of pictures ; satire is a fine conscience, holding up to scorn the things which have no conscience before the awakened consciences of others. A droll infidel, we confess, seems to us like a skeleton with a grinning skull, a death's head introduced, and warranted to dance like harlequin, and gibber like a clown.

But humour does not necessarily imply the funny ; no, it is an easy, harmonious sympathy ; there is a style of talk which stands aloof, which aims to rise, perhaps to soar out of sight, and we are far from deprecating it ; there is an eloquence which soars and sings, darkening and unseen, even as we hear the lark and the nightingale, although we cannot see the singer ; but humour individualizes, and brings down, and brings home. Why, we may see how it is often in a picture. We look at that landscape. It is some scene of mountain, or of lake, upon which the artist has expended all his powers of conception or description ! But in one corner there is a little colour contrasting with, but giving life to the whole, an old woman, it may be, or a girl in a red cloak or frock ; or it is some seaside scene of wild crags and vast rolling billows ; that painting cost the artist all his powers ; but, cunningly, with a mere touch of his pencil, he has introduced life into his picture ; he has put a solitary sea bird, on the wing in the heaven, or sweeping among the dark crags, into it ; the little

human feature in the one, or that motion of life in the other, has given or gives effect to the whole, for we cannot do without life. Usually it may be fairly inferred that, when an image does not impress, either in a picture or a sermon, the artist, or the speaker himself, has not really seen it, although he has introduced it, and, as a general principle, it is so with language, and language is the tool with which preachers have to work ; when language is the result of real feeling and perception, it conveys an adequate impression, always, it must be remembered, to auditors capable of receiving. The solitary figure by the side of the lake, or the bird on the wing over the dark sea or the tall dark limestone crag, suggests to us the true use of humour in its individualizing power in the pulpit.

CHAPTER IX.

FATHER TAYLOR, OF BOSTON.

FATHER TAYLOR died in the year 1871 ; he was born in 1793 ; our readers see, therefore, to how great an age he attained ; but the leaf was withering on the bough ten years before it fell. He was born in Richmond, U.S., but at seventeen made his first acquaintance with Boston ; he was engaged on the sea, and for some time he continued in this occupation. He led a chequered and varied life for some years, with which years we have nothing to do in this brief chapter. He had obtained some education ; and about the year 1819 we find him preaching to the rough sailors at Marblehead, in connection with the Methodist Society of the United States ; but in 1828 the man and his mission met in Boston, and there he continued to the close of his useful and splendid career. The little chapel over which he first became pastor was soon superseded by a large and superior structure ; and, although Father Taylor insisted always on reserving his best sittings for the rough sailors, "his lambs," as he called them, the wealth and culture of the city poured into the galleries to hear the rough child of genius, who was, however, the city's favourite. He was beloved of the choicest society, in the

choicest town of America ; and through his future years he had an entrance to circles and societies which were barred to many, whose names seem greater in the literature of the Church or of the world.

We suppose it possible that he was the greatest natural orator, in our language, of our time. Emerson said that Daniel Webster and Father Taylor were the two greatest poets in the United States ; if there be any truth in this, then Father Taylor was the first, for surely the compactness of his imagination, and the swift glances of his intuition and fancy, leave Webster far behind in the poet's gifts, however superior he might be in the sustained march of legislative, judicial, and forensic eloquence.

He was an immense creature. The largeness of his love, the overwhelming torrent of his affections, constitute his chief characteristic. Behind a hard and weather-beaten exterior, there was a soul which could dart out in indignation and fire, or frolic and play about like the gentlest and most innocent of all created things. He fits into no order of ministers ; certainly he appears to have been nothing like any preacher of our times whom we have heard, or of whom we have read ; he was like himself. He appears to have been the one preacher of our times whose sermons would not print ; we take this to be the most incontestable mark of the most eminent orator. The nearer sermons are to the possibility of being rendered through the medium of the press, the further they are from that indescribable but all-captivating and enchanting charm which defies translation to paper. Even more than Patrick Henry, it is said that Father Taylor was a " forest-born

Demosthenes ;" he was full of fiery words and winged inspirations. We can feel, with the aid of Charles Dickens's description, how fine, forcible, and effective was the sermon he heard ; but it needs the description of the manner of the orator to find anything effective in it. Have we not often said that it is the soul which makes the true speaker ? and have we not often said that we believe reporting sermons and printing sermons have been calamitous and ruinous to fearless, fervid, and effective speaking. The orator shivers before the frigidity of preparation.

From all this Father Taylor was free ; for himself, it is said, he never wrote a sermon, not a skeleton, hardly even a text ; he used to say his hand would swell if he kept it long on the paper. If he found a text, the probability was that he instantly started off, across the Common, or up and down among the wharves ; there, and in this way, he wrought out his argument, and gathered up his illustrations, and sometimes might be heard muttering to himself as he went along upon his way. Hence his sermons were by no means very orderly ; as his editor says, his text read, he was off in a twinkling. " Like Peter Bell, he stepped into his balloon and was up and away ; the text seemed to suggest something, and that, something else, and then, something else ; and so he was upon a sea of fancies, 'a sea of glass mingled with fire,' crystal thoughts and burning passions, the audience responding in tears and laughter ; hits at current follies, blows at orthodoxy and heterodoxy, the passionate entreaty, magnificent description, every sail spread, every inch of steam on, he ploughs through the sea, dashing the spray

over you, and comes at last careering into port gently and sweetly as a June sunset."

Of course, there was a good deal of acting in his sermons, they were not spoken entirely, they were pantomimic ; and all that we have said might be the property and the appropriate description of a preacher who had no claim to any special commendation. It is not the absence of preparation, the absence of book knowledge, and the mere audacious talk which can furnish forth the claim to regard. Father Taylor, eminently holy, a most prayerful, faithful man, was a man of extraordinary genius ; in his soul he was a poet, in the pulpit he appears to have been very much of the highest order of dramatist. Beautiful and concise expressions fell from him apparently most naturally ; but his humour was certainly equal to all, nor was he ever sparing of it, he could not help it, but, even in prayer, he often said things which must provoke the very serious objections of those eminent divines, Dr. Dryasdust and Dr. Grimspeech. Praying for a society which had met with considerable opposition, at a time when the opposition was swelling high, he said, "Bless this glorious order, bless its friends, yes, bless its enemies, and make their hearts as soft as their heads." And very strange was his prayer when once an Evangelical clergyman had visited his church from curiosity, but declined to take a seat in the pulpit because it had once been occupied by the Rev. Henry Ware, an eminent Unitarian minister ; so, then and there, Taylor fell on his knees, and burst into the following brief prayer, "O Lord, there are two things we want to be delivered from in

Boston—one is bad rum, and the other is religious bigotry ; which is worst, Thou knowest and I don't. Amen ! ” A Mr. Snow, at one of the prayer-meetings, not being very warm in his talk, he must have been astonished to hear Father Taylor groan out, “ O Lord, melt that Snow ! ” Indeed, his ejaculations at his prayer-meetings, and his whole behaviour, were quite as remarkable as his achievements in the pulpit were successful ; they were sometimes far from flattering to some of the persons who “ engaged.” Those audiences were largely composed of sailors. On one occasion a wealthy gentleman came to a very warm meeting and made a speech, telling the sailors how much had been done for them, and how grateful they ought to be to the merchants for all their goodness ; as he sat down, feeling, very likely, that Father Taylor’s Church would now roll on for twelve months upon this condescension, he was surprised to hear the Father exclaim, “ Now, is there any other old sinner from up town would like to say a word before we go on with the meeting ? ” He could discern between sincerity and insincerity ; and once, when a character rather remarkable for intemperance was groaning at the end of the room in a prayer-meeting, the Father detected the half hypocrisy, perhaps half sincerity, of the noise, and cried out, “ Come up here, and we’ll teach you to groan from the other side of your mouth.” Curious scenes there must have been in his church sometimes. A good brother from the pulpit, in prayer, was making some nice distinctions between the higher and the lower life of grace in the soul : he was rather astonished to hear Father Taylor, who was

by his side, exclaim, "Lord, save us from splitting hairs!" "I'm not splitting hairs," said the man, doing battle on his knees. "Then ask the Lord for what you want, brother," was the prompt rejoinder. This seems very irreverent to our notions ; but we are not describing a by any means ordinary man. He prayed for President Lincoln, "Lord, guide our dear President, our Abraham, the friend of God like the old Abraham ; save him from those wriggling, piercing, political, slimy, boring keel-worms, don't let them go through the sheathing of his integrity." He was not always in the mood for praying ; once he was asked to pray, and he retorted, "Pray for what? If there's anything you want, I'll pray for it; but it's no use praying unless you have something to pray for." A visitor came down to the meeting with a number of what seemed to him appropriate anecdotes, but which had appeared in all the religious newspapers in the country ; he was startled to hear Father Taylor exclaim, "O Lord, deliver us from stale bread!"

The humour of Father Taylor was of that order that easily touches or rises into the finest poetry. When he was building his new chapel, and preaching a collection sermon for it, in one of the finest and wealthiest churches in Boston, glancing upon the magnificent pillars, he said, "I do not want your arches and columns and draperies for my house, only give me the shavings that fall from your Corinthian pillars." Speaking of the fast age in which we live, and especially of its fast men in America, he said, "If it were possible, they would be glad to put spurs to lightning, and blow a

trumpet in the ears of thunder." He disliked preaching on over-nice distinctions in theology, and spoke of those who were in the habit of doing so as "having only the stem-end of a cucumber, too bitter for sensible people to eat, and only fit to be thrown away." He was very hard on self-conceited saints : "Some people think they are saints ; if they could see themselves as the just in glory see them, they wouldn't dare look a decent devil in the face." One of his members left the Bethel to be baptized ; it was very cold weather, and the water in the baptistery had been artificially warmed. A short time after, Father Taylor met his old friend, and spoke to him as having left the Bethel. "Ah," said the sailor, "I couldn't feel that I could be in the fold unless I went down into Jordan." "Into Jordan," said the old man—" *bil'd* Jordan!" He expressed his dislike of certain types of character often in very droll and singular language. Meanness and hypocrisy were his special abomination : he was wont to say, "It would take more grace to save such a man than it would take skim-milk to fatten an elephant." His drollery seemed sometimes fairly to carry him away, even in the midst of a grand and graphic description ; describing, for instance, the hot chase of Pharaoh after the Israelites, and his discomfiture in the sea, he paused, and suddenly dashed from his climax—" Brothers, I don't know what you think about it, but I should say Pharaoh must have been a *hard drinker*."

Such illustrations as those we have given seem only to indicate a droll, grotesque manner of speech, rather of the order of our Rowland Hill. They are

quite the inferior aspect of his character in public, although they indicate great readiness of wit and self-possession of manner ; but the same vividness of mind shone out in very superior and different radiations. "When I die," he exclaimed in one of his sermons, "don't bury me up in the dirty ground, carry me out to my own blue sea, where I may have the seaweed for my shroud, the coral for my coffin, ocean-mountains for my tombstone, and the music of zephyrs and howling storms for my requiem." On one occasion he was speaking of the objection some preachers had to baptizing the children of unconverted parents ; he took a little infant in his arms, he raised it as he raised his voice, with an inimitable gesture, and exclaimed with volcanic vehemence, "Why, if the old devil himself would bring me a child to baptize I would baptize it, and say, 'Devil, go to your own place ; angels, take the baby!'" Mrs. Jameson says of him,—

"He could not ope
His mouth, but out there flew a trope."

These images and allusions had a freshness, an originality, and sometimes an oddity, that was quite startling ; and they were generally, though not always, borrowed from his former profession, that of a sailor." Mrs. Jameson met him one day in the street ; he told her he had been burying an infant, and he alluded in a pathetic manner to the number of infants he had buried lately ; then, after a pause, looking upward, he added, "There must be something wrong somewhere ; *there's a storm brewing when the doves are all flying aloft.*" Once he spoke

of the folly of expecting great results at once ; it was all beautifully expressed in one sentence, "*Carry not the seed-basket and the sickle into the field together.*" He abounded in those sudden little rapid turns of speech showing deep feeling. He visited a widow and a daughter, just utterly crushed and broken down with their new grief ; he said, taking the widow's hand, "The thing you have dreaded so long has come upon you ; but, Ann, remember, *there has been no murder committed in this house* ; remember that, Ann." Miss Martineau heard him one morning, when he was touched by the grief of a widow, who had also lost some dear child, and he burst out in prayer, "Father, look upon us, *we are a widow* ; Father, the mother's heart Thou knowest, the mother's bleeding heart Thou pitiest, sanctify to us the removal of this lamb." Miss Martineau heard him in prayer on another occasion, when Boston was fearing conflagration from the intensity of the heat, and he then broke forth, "Give us water, water ; the brooks refuse to murmur, and the streams are dead ! Break up the fountains, open the secret springs that Thy hand knoweth. Give us water, water ! Let us not perish by a famine of water, or a deluge of conflagration, for we dread the careless wandering spark." Preaching a funeral sermon for a very useful minister, who died very young of consumption, he spoke with extraordinary eloquence and power to a deeply-affected people ; he said, "God did not wish the dear little man to preach, He wanted him in heaven ; but he was anxious to do some service for his Lord, and his request was granted. When his first year closed, he

would have been taken at once to heaven, but you were so importunate to have him back, that God indulged you for a little while ; you had no right to expect he would remain with you ; *he preached every sermon, as you saw, with his winding-sheet upon his arm.*" Very strange, some will think very questionable, were many of the excursions of his fancy in the pulpit ; none more so than when he preached the dedication sermon of the church of the Rev. Dr. Wise, of New York. All the clergymen of the town were there in full force ; Father Whitney, the Unitarian, and his colleague ; Mr. Hunt, the Episcopal clergyman ; Dr. Cornell, the Calvinist ; the Baptist minister, the Universalist minister, the Restorationist.

" Father Taylor commenced his sermon, and felt it his duty to take all to task for their various errors and peculiar notions, commencing with Father Whitney, as was meet, he being the oldest minister present ; and, addressing himself to Mr. Wise, he said, ' My brother, preach the depravity, the natural wickedness of man ; some make him very good by nature, and think there is no devil in him. But there is. Dress him up ever so much, make him ever so learned, adorn him in all the robes of politeness and all the refinement of the most polished society of the most ornamental age of the world, and you cannot make him good. Oh no ! You have only to pull off the winding-sheet, and there he is, poor, weak, sinful human nature still.' Thus much for Father Whitney and his colleague. When he started on a new denomination, he again directed his address to Mr. Wise, by saying, ' My brother,' —

here he took the Universalist; he was of the then modern school of Mr. Ballou, as he believed in no future judgment—‘My brother,’ said he, ‘preach the judgment, a future judgment. For my part, I never could see why any man should be afraid or ashamed to preach it.’ There sat the Universalist minister in the pulpit, within his reach. But he did not spare him. It was now my turn, (says the minister who gives this account). ‘My brother, preach free agency. Don’t be a fatalist. Some ministers preach fatalism; tie men’s hands behind their backs, and then tell them to work. Don’t preach that; don’t make the Almighty decree everything from all eternity, and then call on men to break the decree. Preach man’s free will. Who ever heard of any will but a free will?’ As we supposed this was meant for us, we laid it to heart; and, though we did not admit this to be a true exhibition of any Calvinism, it was Father Taylor’s view of it. Here he took the Episcopal minister. ‘My brother, keep your pulpit doors open. Some ministers shut them against every minister except one of their own stripe. Don’t do that. If I could have my will, there never should be a pulpit door in the land. There are no doors to my pulpit, and so none can be shut.’ Next he took the Baptist. ‘My brother, preach baptism, it is an ordinance of God. Baptize the converted, but don’t make baptism all the gospel. Don’t make water everything. There are other elements in the world besides water; and there are other things in the gospel besides baptism, though some ministers never see anything there but baptism. Don’t make dipping all your gospel.’ Then came the Restora-

tionist. ‘My brother, preach future punishment. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Leave them there, my brother, where the Bible does, and let any minister get them out who can. But don’t *you* try it.’ Having left us all on the beach, stranded high and dry, he took another tack,—showed his catholicity, and spread his wide mantle of charity over us all, and said, ‘This is one of the most blessed seasons I ever enjoyed; indeed, I have never seen but one like it, and that was when my own church was dedicated, when we had all the stripes in the union; and, bless the Lord! we’ve got them all now.’ This account, which we vouch for as true, should silence the stories floating about, that Father Taylor had no rigidity in his creed, but was a mere wit. He was rigid enough in that wonderful sermon to cut and slash us all, to spare none but his brother Methodist; and then he was charitable enough to throw his long arms around us all, and give us a real Methodist hug, a genuine John Wesley ‘love feast,’ and assure us that, during his whole ministry, he had never had but one such glorious time before. His sparing none of us not a whit, his leaving us high and dry, where even a ‘spring tide’ could never reach us,—his applying his rebuke to all of us—Unitarian, Orthodox, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, and Restorationist; then the contrast—the fearful scowl changing to a beaming smile, the vengeance-bearing countenance becoming a fascinating Venus, those long arms, that had just been plunging us in what he believed the deep sea of our floundering, stretched out to draw us to his bosom, and then that

wiry supple form (a perfect hickory withe), bending forward to rescue us from the briny deluge he had just poured upon us, all so graphic, all acted out so pantomimic, as would have thrown Mr. Gough and the finest actors far into the shade,—presented one of the most dramatic scenes ever witnessed. When arraying our heresies before us, his wrinkled countenance was nearest to that of a demon (if a demon has a countenance) that we could imagine; and, when his charity took us into Christian fellowship, angelic beauty beamed from his eyes, and the most affectionate salutation of brotherly love flowed from his tongue, so that we were all ready to exclaim,—

“‘From whence doth this union arise?’

All this showed the wonderful power of this unlearned man; and all tends to approve what we have often advocated and recommended to young clergymen—the cultivation of a habit of extemporaneous preaching, which an admirable Christian paper dignifies by the name of ‘egotistical twaddle!’ Father Taylor never preached a written sermon, never knew how to write one, would have been shorn of his strength if he had undertaken it. His sermons were the brilliant efforts of an active brain, a warm heart, and a fervent love, on the spur of the occasion.”

His liberality of sentiment, in fact, became scandalous. At last an article appeared in the *Recorder*, asking why Father Taylor, if he were a Trinitarian, should be willing to associate with the Unitarians? We have said that he was not affectionately disposed towards the use of pen and ink; but he wrote to the editor this answer:—

“SIR,—You ask how it is that I, if a Trinitarian, am willing to associate so with Unitarians. I am willing to answer your question. Because they are the only people I go among where I am in no danger either of hearing my religion insulted, or of having my morals corrupted.

“I am yours, EDWARD T. TAYLOR.”

“Creeds,” he was in the habit of saying, “creeds, shipmates—if anybody were to ask you, who made the heavens and the earth, and all that are in them, you would very properly answer, God. And if you should be asked who made all the creeds, you would just as readily respond, Men, and be right in both cases. Now, creeds, like Joseph’s coat of many colours, are made of patches, no two of them are alike, and none to-day what it was when first made. Creeds are all well enough in their way; but you will readily perceive, like everything human, they are imperfect. No man shall make a creed for me, and I am certain I do not wish to make a creed for any one. But a common danger does make a common creed.”

Father Taylor had a broad, inclusive, loving nature; he was strongly evangelical, but he frequently found himself called severely to account for his friendliness with, and tenderness towards, Unitarians; he was minister in Boston during the whole time of the ministry of Ralph Waldo Emerson, of whom he said, “If the devil got him, he would never know what to do with him; there seems to me to be a screw loose somewhere, though I never could tell where, for listen as close as I might, I could never hear any jar in the machinery.” But this must have been spoken, we presume, with

reference to the pulpit ministrations of the great essayist, and not as a criticism upon his published works. But the lofty tone of liberality, couched, we think it must be admitted, in somewhat extravagant language of compliment, surely reached its utmost flight when he met Channing, and said to him, "When you die, angels will fight to have the honour of carrying you to heaven on their shoulders." At the same time, he seems to have been not always remarkably affectionate towards his Socinian neighbours ; he shut himself up one Saturday, and left orders with his servant, that if the Apostle Paul called to see him, he was not to be admitted ; Dr. Bentley, however, a well-known Socinian preacher, pushed in, disregarding the injunction, and he stayed the whole afternoon ; rising to take his leave, he said, "Well, you gave orders that the Apostle Paul should not come in, but you see I've had two hours of your company." "Ah," said Taylor, "but I expect to spend a whole blessed eternity with St. Paul ; but when I say good-bye to you, it's good-bye for ever."

Jenny Lind, when in Boston, attended his services at the Bethel. He neither knew she was present when she first went, nor that she intended to be ; but some over-righteous busybody sent a request to him, no doubt arising from the furore of the excitement at her presence in America, that he would preach on popular amusements. The church was crowded, the pulpit and the stairs were filled. The sermon pursued its way, denouncing dancing, card-playing, gambling, and theatre-going, but passing off into loving eulogy on music ; and then came a glowing

tribute to the power of song, and to the “goodness, modesty, and charity of that sweetest of all singers who has just alighted upon these shores.” Jenny Lind herself, unknown to the preacher, was leaning forward and drinking all in with delight, when,—surely to the amazement of everybody,—up rose a tall, stern personage on the pulpit stairs, and inquired whether any one who died at one of Miss Lind’s concerts would go to heaven. We may imagine the disgust and contempt which swept across the face of the preacher, as, with astonishment, he glared at the interloper and replied, “A Christian will go to heaven wherever he dies; and a fool will be a fool wherever he is, even on the steps of the pulpit.” After his Bethel became so marked an object, his personal friendship with the Unitarians excited grave disapprobation; and an eminent clergyman of the exclusive school called upon him one day, in a remarkably genial mood, saying he had come to help him. “We feel,” said he, “a very great interest in your enterprise, it is doing great good in the city; our denomination purpose to support you in it.” “Thanks to the Lord for anybody who is going to help us!” said Father Taylor. “There is one condition about it,” said Dr. ——; “you must have no fellowship with the Unitarians.” “Doctor,” said Father Taylor, and the flash from his countenance may be realised as he said it, “I can’t do without the Unitarians, but I can do without you.”

Interruptions in the pulpit never disturbed him; there was something so natural, so colloquial frequently, in his style of speech, that, perhaps, it very often provoked response and reply. He was

sometimes wont to single some person out, to individualize, and to talk to, with the same freedom as if he had met the person in the street. "Ah ! my jolly tar," he said once to a sailor who happened at that moment to catch his eye, "ah, here you are in port again, God bless you ; see to your helm, and you will reach a fairer port by-and-bye. *Hark ! don't you hear the bells of heaven over the sea ?*" He excelled in those sudden rapid turns of expression and feeling in which the power of apostrophe exists ; preaching from the great saying of Paul, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," etc., etc., he suddenly stopped, and cried with a loud voice, "Paul, are there any more crowns up there ?" He paused, looked down, casting his eyes over the congregation, "Yes, my brethren, there are more crowns left. Blessed be God ! there is one for me, and one for all of you who love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Preaching on universalism, from the text, "The wicked shall be turned into hell," he exclaimed, "God said that—how many piping pettifoggers of Satan will you set against His word ? Voltaire!"—pausing, bending forward, and looking down—"Voltaire, what do you think about it now ?"

Good and great as he was, he once fell into the clutches of the law. A poor sailor owed a man a bill, who was going to take his furniture ; Father Taylor offered to let the sailor paint his house, and so pay the bill himself. He gave the man his note ; the sailor ran off and did not do the painting. Taylor claimed that he did not owe the note. The man sued him, and seized upon his horse and

carriage, a very valuable present from a friend, which he rated very highly. Taylor forbade any of his friends to attend the sale to save his horse and carriage; and he refused to accept the balance offered him by the sheriff over the claim. But he made the subject the topic of his next Sabbath discourse, from the text, "If any man take away thy cloak, let him have thy coat also." And the sermon appears to have been a very wise one. He went on to speak of the duty of submitting to the law, even though it were unjust or cruel; just as sailors must obey laws on board ship, must not question them, deny duty, or mutiny, even although they were abused. "If," said he, "we were going upon the principle of resisting evil, we should be lawless, for all human laws have evil in them; they were made by sinners to govern sinners, and the devil had a hand in making all of them. All human laws are crooked, like the roads in a new country; law is not always justice; there is only one just, perfectly square law in the universe, and that is God's law; it is straight right up and down, and does not twist any more than a pump-bolt. You won't gain anything by going to law, I tell you, the feathers will come out of your neighbour's goose. A Christian going to law is out of his place, he is coming down to the level of the world. Suppose you were going along the street where a jackass was hitched to a post, and he was to up foot and kick you, then you should up and kick him. Why, he is only acting out his own nature, while you have made a jackass of yourself, and there's a pair of jackasses; I entreat you all not to make jackasses of yourselves." Then

he proceeded to give an account of his own case, moralizing upon it as he went along. The man who had injured him was all the time in the church ; he could endure it no longer, he got up and made haste to the door ; the preacher shouted, "Here, come here, you have not got half your dose yet." But the man thought otherwise, he did not stop to hear any more, but hastened out of the chapel. The Rev. Elijah Kellogg was there, and he narrates the whole circumstances of the sermon ; as he came out he noticed the satisfaction of the rough sailors at the plain talk of their favourite apostle, clapping one another on the back, and exclaiming, "Is not this better than a theatre ?"

He was one of the most extraordinary of modern preachers. To those to whom he especially addressed himself, he was a perpetual fountain of inspiration and joy ; but we have seen that the most cultivated tastes—Mrs. Jameson, Emerson, Everett, and a host beside—felt no offence as they listened to his ministrations, which trembled with all the brightness of the aurora, flashed like lightning, or fell upon the conscience like refreshing rain. The man was certainly inimitable : it is impossible to hold him up as a model, he was a law unto himself, he swept along through his own large ellipse, an entirely extemporaneous talker, throwing forth his words with all the force of geysers ; he was entirely untrammelled by any of the proprieties of denominationalism on the one hand, or of human learning, and scholarship on the other ; he was something like what he said St. Peter was, "the last end of a thunder-storm, softened by the breath of the

Almighty." He puts us in mind of what he said about sailors. "Sailors ignorant?" he exclaimed once; "sailors know everything, they grasp the world in their hand like an orange." And there is a great deal of truth in it, both of them, and especially of him; not knowledge that can be very nicely fitted into routine, but a knowledge of experience cropping up for all occasions. We see very clearly, his was a mind routine would have damaged. Suppose this man to have been drilled in class-rooms, to have travelled through college and university courses, to have had imparted to him the vanity and self-consciousness of the bookman, and the nice fastidiousness of the grammarian, nothing could ever have robbed him of much of the flow and power of his character, but he would simply have become a fine canal, instead of a grand, ample, flowing river.

For indeed it is true, there are men who preach like canals—their divisions resemble the locks, and their ideas are tugged heavily along from the margin; and there are preachers who resemble the river, in a fine and natural freedom of character and an instructive harmony and beauty combining all pleasant things upon their shores of thought. He had a free, spontaneous mind, inquisitive and quick to apprehend, strong, retentive, and ready; a knowledge more of men, things, and the world than of books. And who does not know how the knowledge of books weakens the mind, unless it be related to a knowledge of life and things?

We have already said that manner is everything in the pulpit. It is no depreciation of the orator's genius to say that his power lies less in what he

says than in how he says it ; his manner is his soul and it measures the earnestness of the man ; but thus it appears that earnestness and eccentricity are by no means incompatible or uncompanionable. We are not thinking of that eccentricity in which inferior men think, by loud shouting, or mere drollery and oddity, or frantic gesticulation, to produce the impression which only sanctified genius can produce ; the counterfeit is wretched, and the end is only derision and disgust. Charles Dickens heard Father Taylor preach, and has given to us a vivid description of the sermon, from the text "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved ?" He says that Father Taylor handled his text in all kinds of ways, and twisted it into all manner of shapes. He was, as usual, preaching to sailors in the Bethel Chapel ; his imagery was all drawn from the sea, and he walked to and fro in the pulpit, with his Bible under his arm. "Who are these ?" he exclaimed. "Who are they ? who are these fellows ? where do they come from ? where are they going to ? Come from ! What's the answer ?" leaning out of the pulpit, and pointing downward with his right hand : "From below !" starting back again, and looking at the sailors before him : "From below, my brethren. From under the hatchways of sin, battened down above you by the Evil One. That's where you come from !" then a walk up and down the pulpit. "And where are you going ?" stopping abruptly. "Where are you going ? Aloft !" (very softly, and pointing upward). "Aloft !" (louder). "Aloft !" (louder still) ; "that's where you're going —with a fair wind—all taut and trim, steering

direct for heaven, in all its glory, where there are no storms, nor foul weather, and where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Another walk: "That's where you are going to, my friends; that's it; that's the place; that's the port; that's the haven. It's a blessed harbour. Still water there in all changes of the winds and the tides; no driving ashore upon the rocks, or slipping your cables and running out to sea there. Peace! peace! peace! all peace!" Another walk, and, patting the Bible under his left arm, "What, these fellows are coming from the wilderness, are they? Yes, from the dreary blighted wilderness of iniquity, whose only crop is death. But do they lean on anything, or do they lean upon nothing, these poor seamen?" (three raps upon the Bible). "Oh yes, yes; they lean upon the arm of their Beloved!" (three more raps), "upon the arm of their Beloved!" (three more raps, and a walk), "pilot, guiding star, and compass all in one! Here it is" (three more), "here it is; they can do their seaman's duty manfully, and be easy in their minds, in the utmost peril and danger, with this!" (two more.) "They can come, even these poor fellows can come from the wilderness leaning on the arm of their Beloved, and go up, up, up"—raising his hand higher and higher at every repetition of the word, so that he stood with it at last stretched above his head, regarding them in a strange, rapt manner, and pressing the book triumphantly to his breast, until he gradually subsided into some other portion of his discourse.

We suppose it is certain that now nothing better can be given to the world about him than the pleasing

biography to which we have been greatly indebted for this paper ; his name has long been well known to us, and it seems some occasion for grief that all the rich sayings, humorous and poetical, which have called forth from such competent critics such glowing and fervent eulogy, must for the most part perish, except as they bore that best of all fruitfulness which made his name beloved, and pronounced with affection in every part of the world, by those to whom he was an especial apostle and favourite—"the men who go down to the sea in ships, and do business on the great waters." He lived so long, that during many years he was laid by from active labour ; but, when he died, a universal gush of love, if not of grief, burst forth and followed him to the grave. His death was not unbeautiful. Some one called upon him just before, and said, "There's sweet rest in heaven." "Go there, if you want to," said the old man. But the consoler persisted, "Think of the angels who will welcome you." "What do I want with angels ?" he said, "I want folks ;" but then he added, "Angels are folks," and that thought seemed to comfort him—"Angels are folks." He prayed as he was dying, "Some summer morning, Lord, come and snatch me to Thyself." Roman Catholic children and young women thronged round his coffin on the day of his burial. He lay on his cheek in his coffin, in his white dressing-gown ; above him hung an anchor of fragrant flowers ; so crowds had an opportunity of gazing their last upon his serene features, majestic in their last repose, all the weariness and the decay gone, and only his spiritual greatness floating over his countenance.

We have only to say now, that he seems to us, among the many remarkable preachers of our time, entirely himself, and one of the most remarkable ; second in his own way to none ; in the faculty of pure preaching, the life of simple speech, and the effect of simple speech, superior, perhaps, to every one. He was a wandering voice. Looking through the galleries of preachers, it is quite easy to see a number of things he was not, and never pretended to be. Nor is it of any use commending him to imitation. Such men are remarkable, almost, as curiosities ; and yet perhaps it is still true, that the intense mind, bringing itself face to face with the thought which has impressed it, rather than dissipating intensity by elaborate word-spinning about it, might sometimes rise to fervent apprehensions and feelings which, if not magnificent, as Father Taylor's, might yet, like his, be fresh, unmonotonous, and interesting by their human life and power.

CHAPTER X.

LIVE COALS, TEXTS AND TOPICS OF DISCOURSE.

THAT was a stirring spectacle, to which we have already slightly referred, when, in Judea, in the time of the Restoration, Ezra ascended the pulpit of wood in the great broad street called the Water-gate, in Old Jerusalem, when all the people "gathered themselves together as one man" to listen to the reading of the Book of the Law. There were probably from fifty to a hundred thousand persons present, bending and straining their ears reverently to catch some of the words of the loved and glorious book ; a stirring sight indeed in that lonely land, isolated in locality, and cut off from all the nations of the earth by affinities dimly comprehended, but eternally interesting to themselves, and to millions on millions then unborn. It was a Sabbath-day. It is not difficult to conceive its Oriental splendour ; the fierceness of the sun had not perhaps risen when, in the early morning, the restored dwellings were all forsaken ; the city bore indeed all the traces of desolation, the houses were stained with the appearances of ruin, but nature was lovely : the tamarind, the palm, and the dark cedar bent gracefully on the distant horizon. On the outskirts of

that vast crowd, it is true, the sceptic, the pagan, and the sneerer were to be seen ; and those who knew the temper of the Israelite knew, also, that in the midst of that vast crowd were many faint and faithless hearts ; but the mighty nationality of their ancient faith, that bright morning, quickened every pulse and gladdened every cheerless spirit. The crowds of the priests were there ; the sacred band of the Levites ; the singers with their instruments were not wanting, and even the weary and the oppressed Nethinim, hewer of wood and drawer of water, felt that morning that he had some relationship with the land of the covenant and the promise.

But when Ezra appeared in that pulpit, over the platform on which stood the priests and the princes of the people, and produced the Bible, the Book of the Law, "in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people," then rose to their feet, with a reverent joy, the great audience. They stood up ; and as he, the great representative of their religion, blessed the Lord, the great God of their fathers, a loud but deep universal Amen ! Amen ! ascended from every lip in that vast crowd. They lifted up their hands—a forest of hands—and then with deep silence "bowed their faces to the ground." It was a sublime and affecting sight ; it stirs and affects us now, after all these centuries have rolled away, and scattered to the remotest climes the dust of that amazing host. The alternations of that deep and full Amen, and the heads bowed in silence in the dust until, when the priests began to read the Book which had been silently held aloft, the roll simply unfolded, in the majesty of expressive silence

to the eye, then there was a burst of weeping through all the host that once more the Fatherland was reached ; once more the oracle of Sinai was proclaimed ; tears of patriotic piety welled up from their hearts as they heard the words of their beloved Law. Then, the Book was read distinctly, and the priests gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading, till after many hours had passed ; then Ezra said to them all, "*Go your way : eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy unto the Lord, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*"

Often as we have read that beautiful history it has seemed to us to be the very ideal of a Christian service, and, indeed, in all ages since, the truest service has approached to this, and partaken of all the features of that great and memorable day. The mighty multitudes of the people animated by one impulse of devotion, the priests by the mingled desire to inflame the heart with gratitude and to lead the spirit by gentle instruction, till, when the service is broken up, each auditor feels that he has not only eaten the fat, and drunk the sweet for himself, but that he has the portion for those for whom nothing had been prepared, confined to their rooms or avocations at home. Mighty is the ministry that can thus dispense spiritual food, and worthless that which cannot.

Very different was the scene we should have beheld had we then, or rather at some subsequent period, when that city was in its pride and splendour, entered Athens. At the very moment, probably,

when Ezra listed aloft the Book of the Law to the gaze of the people, beneath the beautiful skies of Greece, some of the great teachers of that august republic were discoursing. It was the age of Grecian mind and philosophy; walk through the charmed city; stretch the imagination; let it rest on the whole of the religious and literary history of that wonderful and immortal spot, everything awes the heart and captivates the taste; the imagination is inflamed there; the senses are all entranced there. Very different those white shining marble beauties amidst the trees, those glorious pillars of Pentelicus that crown the hill, the long groves and arcades of statues that stretch out seven miles to the Propylæum, the magnificent temples, the gods in their agony or their calm; very different this proud spot from the poor deserted and tributary spot of earth we have left where the walls began to look out from their encumbering desolation; but which spot of earth has influenced most the moral destinies of the world? Step behind that grove of thick laurels and beautiful trees; that venerable and cheery old man is Herodotus, reading his immortal History. Have you listened long enough? Step on. Here is a spectacle, this mighty theatre filled with all the beauty and bravery of Greece, the Panopticon of that civilization then bending beneath the strong spell of a genius the most awful of that age and world; Sophocles is reading his "Œdipus in Colonus." Step on again; change again the scene and the age, but linger in the same city. Enter beneath this marble portico; select, but grave and great, see them gathered round that monarch-

man ; it is Plato mingling and pouring forth his wonderful dialectics of light and fire. Yet, in all that city, among all those teachers and auditors, there is not one scene so sublime as that we saw a little time since in the holy, ruined Jerusalem, when, before the holding aloft the Book of the Law, the mighty thousands bowed their heads, and sobbed in speechless love and reverence. And yet we fear it must be said of a great number of our ministers, especially of our rising ministers, that they imitate Greece rather than Judea, Herodotus or Plato rather than Ezra, and aim rather to produce a cold and brilliant essay than a warm and fiery emotion of love or a useful and permanent principle of action in the heart.

In some future chapter we shall discourse upon Dry Sticks,—a large forest, if not a fruitful one,—in dealing with texts and topics and modes of discourse ; the words of this chapter shall be devoted to live coals which have kindled souls from the throne of eloquence. We need scarcely say, first, everything is in the living mind : the living mind imparts its own freshness and fulness of life to every thing, text, or topic it touches ; when the preacher always thinks of himself, and carries his own intellectual self and perceptions foremost and uppermost, he finds himself ever defeated and thrown back. A touch of true nature finds people, melts them, and bears them down ; but it may not be always easy work, and all *real* ministers have had depressing experiences. A deservedly well-known, greatly loved and useful clergyman of the Church of England has told us how well he remembers, when

he was a young curate, calling upon a poor old woman in a grim neighbourhood, in his large London parish ; the old creature saw, it may be supposed, that he was a kind of 'prentice hand at his work, and the poor old body attempted to put him at his ease in it. "Now," said she, "young man, I see you are a new hand ; don't you be narvious ; all that you have got to do is to read me a short psalm, and give me a shilling"—not a very hopeful kind of pastoral visitation this for the Live Coal which the young man unquestionably became. And we know how the entrance on the work of the ministry in the Dark Ages has often been satirized ; there is a capital French epigram before us, describing the popular impression of the monk, minister, parson, or priest before the Reformation. We need not quote the French, but simply give the translation, from the pen of Dr. Adam Clarke :—

" A crotchet came into a wiseacre's head
To enter the Church for a morsel of bread ;
So away to the bishop he instantly hies,
Announces his business ; the prelate replies,
' If you wish to be priested, and guide men to heaven,
How many in number are the Sacraments *seven* ? '
Having studied a while, he replied, ' They are *three* ! '
The prelate rejoins, ' Pray, sir, which may they be ? '
' Faith, Hope, and Charity,' the scholar replies ;
' By the Mass ! ' says the bishop, ' you're wondrously wise ;
You've answered discreetly, your learning is sound,
Few bishops at present have lore so profound ;
See, clerk, that his orders be written with speed,
He merits the tonsure, and you shall be fee'd.' "

Heat ! Live coals ! But a great deal of what is supposed to aid the preacher now-a-days, we should

call, if we may borrow an expression from the science of energy in our time, *a mechanical equivalent for heat*. It is known, or it is suspected, that our planet is suffering from the decay, the diminution of energy, or force; that she seems to stagger, as if tired, through the celestial spaces; and as with the planet, so with the pulpit; our studies for the pulpit seem often to be like a laying the wood, but putting no fire under; and even if the fire were put under, it could only be another kind of friction, a mechanical equivalent for heat.

Few words about preaching have had more of the live coal in them than some by Charles Dickens. He went to hear a well-known minister preach to four thousand people in the Britannia Theatre; the preacher talked about a Christian philosopher contemplating death, and so on, and Dickens was disappointed; he mentioned no names, but he said, "Why, in the New Testament there is the most beautiful and affecting history conceivable by man, and there are terse models for all prayer and for all preachers; else why are they there? Consider! As to the history, *tell it*. Some people cannot read; some people will not read; many people (this especially holds with the young and the ignorant) find it hard to pursue the verse form in which the book is prescribed to them, and imagine that those breaks imply gaps and want of continuity. Help them over the first stumbling-block by setting forth the history in narrative, with no fear of exhausting it. You will never preach so well, you will never move them so profoundly, you will never send them away with half so much to think of. Which is the

better interest, Christ's choice of twelve poor men to help in those merciful wonders among the poor and rejected, or the pious bullying of a whole Union full of paupers? What is your changed philosopher to wretched me,—peeping in at the door, out of the mud of the streets and of my life, when you have the widow's son to tell me about? the ruler's daughter—and the other figure at the door? When the brother of the two sisters was dead, one of the two ran to the mourner, crying, 'The Master is come, and calleth for *thee*.' Let the preacher who will thoroughly forget himself, and remember no individuality but one, and no eloquence but one, stand up before four thousand men and women at the Britannia Theatre, any Sunday night, recounting that narrative to them, as to fellow-creatures, and he shall see a sight!"

The text has often been a *live coal*; sometimes we have even thought, when announced, that it must be the best part of all the sermon, but, certainly, from lips of a widely different order from him of whom Cowper speaks as

"The thing which mounts the rostrum with a skip."

Levity in the pulpit is, if we think of it, a wonderful thing; and it can only coexist with an utter abandonment to conceit, and entire unconsciousness both of the sacred truth, and of the deference due to an audience of thinking, affectionate beings. But levity itself is many-coloured, and there is a kind of levity which audiences have liked and encouraged,—a ridiculous and flippant treatment of sacred topics, ingenious, trifling, exhibiting, perhaps,

the cleverness of the preacher and his knowledge of his own cleverness, but out of keeping with the great business for which the pulpit was erected. In the history of the pulpit there have been times when this ingenious trifling was greatly the fashion. A preacher of the times of James the First has left a sermon from the text, "*And Bartholomew*," the great business of which was to show that the name of Bartholomew never appears in Scripture without the copulative conjunction "*and*," and from this he proceeds to argue for the Christian duty of mutual help and assistance, and all this is evolved from the monosyllable "*and*." There is also a well-known story of one of these ingenious worthies, who was a candidate for a lectureship in one of the churches in London; and, who, desirous of giving a most favourable impression of the ingenuity with which he could torture a text to his own meaning, took for his subject the word "*But*." The disjunctive conjunction led him to discourse and dwell upon the truth that there was no lot in life without its cross: "*Naaman was a mighty and honourable man of valour, but he was a leper.*" "*The five wicked cities were as fruitful as the garden of the Lord, but the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.*" "*The inhabitants of Ai thought they had put the Israelites to flight, but they knew not that there were liers in wait behind the city*"; and so went on the divine, well satisfied with his ingenious performance. Arrived in the vestry, he was met by the chief trustee of the lectureship, who said to him, "*Sir, it was a most ingenious discourse, and we are exceedingly obliged*

to you for it, *but* you are not the preacher that will do for us." It has been truly said that there is a great difference between the foolishness of preaching and foolish preaching. There have been foolish sermons where the preacher has been altogether unaware of the folly leaping from his lips. Sometimes the overflowing humour of a man has led him to be guilty of sins against good taste; on the other hand, the entire absence of humour in some men has quite prevented their perception of the grotesque. It is to Dr. Parker, of London, we are indebted for an illustration of the first, upon the text, "Your adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." I do not think his readers would be likely to forget his four heads of analytic Satanology: First, *who* the devil is he? "Your adversary." Second, *what* the devil is he like? Like a "roaring lion." Third, *where* the devil is he? "He is going about." Fourth, *what* the devil is he up to? He is "seeking whom he may devour."* Is not this a pretty model of what may be called "the textual" style of treatment of a subject?

But as an illustration of the second order—the entire absence of humour—we might refer back to Robert Robinson's account, already quoted, of what may be called truly a nasty sermon, from the ill-judged text Leviticus iii. 3, 4: "And he shall offer," etc.†

And yet even in such expositions as these perhaps

* "Springdale Abbey: Extracts from the Diaries and Letters of an English Preacher."

† See pages 275, 276.

everything depends upon the man who handles the text. Our readers are certainly acquainted with that most enchanting book Hugh Miller's "My Schools and Schoolmasters," and they will probably remember his account of his early minister and friend, Alexander Stewart, of Cromarty, of whom the great geologist says, "How could such a man pass from earth and leave no trace behind him?" and to him he applies on his death the magnificent lines of the poet,—

"A mighty spirit was eclipsed ; a power
Had passed from day to darkness, to whose hour
Of light no likeness was bequeathed,
No name."

Even Hugh Miller heard Mr. Stewart preach from the same subject as that of the nausea-creating text we have quoted above. "He drew a picture of the slaughtered animal, foul with dust and blood, and streaming in its impurity to the sun, as it awaited the consuming fire amid the uncleanness of the ashes outside the camp, a vile and horrid thing, which no one could see without experiencing emotions of disgust, nor touch without contracting defilement. The description," says Hugh Miller, "appeared too painfully vivid, its introduction too little in accordance with just taste, but the master in this difficult walk knew well what he was doing, 'and that,' he said, pointing to the strongly coloured picture he had just completed, 'and that is sin!' By one stroke the intended effect was produced, and the rising disgust and horror transferred from the revolting material image to the great moral evil."

This is fine, but it is only the great masters alike of analogy, language, and emotion, who ought to dare to attempt to deal thus with these delicate and difficult themes.

We are speaking of texts, and of their varied mode of treatment. Old Matthew Wilks was every way an oddity in our English pulpit ; he was one of the fathers and founders of our London Missionary Society ; he was the pastor of the two largest congregations in London in his day ; he succeeded George Whitefield at the Tabernacles of Moorfields and Tottenham Court Road ; but he was an oddity. He was a most eminently respectable man and minister, but none the less an oddity, and, in spite of his eccentricities, an eminently useful man, and a very powerful and popular preacher ; but he was very fond of taking texts of one word. We remember a very fair illustration of his style, in a text of this sort, from John : “ *Afterwards.*” He began by deprecating the idea that he had taken the text for the purpose of showing the superior ability of the preacher, remarking that vanity is hateful in any place, but most in the pulpit ; hateful in any person, but most in the minister ; hateful in any age, but most in grey hairs ; and then followed a set of very natural divisions. First, men are indisposed to give up sin until they have felt the power of judgment, as the Lord said, “ I will yet bring one more plague upon Pharaoh, and *afterwards* he will let you go.” Second, the power of remorse, as in Esau. “ *Afterwards*, when he would have inherited the blessing, there was found no place for repentance.” Third, as furnishing the point of view for earthly

trouble. "No affliction seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, but *afterwards* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit," etc., etc. Fourth, suggesting the anticipations of heaven. "Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel and *afterward* receive me to glory." Fifth, suggesting warning to impenitence. "*After* death the judgment." A very brief outline of a very impressive sermon, illustrating the humour of the preacher, but with a practical not less than a pithy turn which saves it from the appearance of being founded in mere eccentricity.

Some preachers will be too fine, and, whatever the genius of a man may be, finery fairly dissipates all usefulness. Dr. Winter. Hamilton was a great man, a great scholar, a great essayist, and a great preacher, a great wit and humorist too; but he could not speak simply, and one who translated the twenty-third Psalm into his ordinary style of dialect, scarcely exaggerated. Here is the twenty-third Psalm as he would have rendered it: "Deity is my Pastor. I shall not be indigent. He maketh me to recumb on the verdant lawn. He leadeth me beside the unrippled liquidities. He reinstalleth my spirits, and conducteth me in the avenues of rectitude for the celebrity of His appellations. Unquestionably, though I perambulate the glen of the umbrages of the sepulchral dormitories, I will not be perturbed by appalling catastrophes, for Thou art present; Thy wand and Thy crook insinuate delectation. Thou spreadest a refection before me in the midst of inimical scrutations. Thou perfumest my locks with odoriferous unguents; my chalice exuberates. Indubitably benignity and commiseration shall continue all

the diuturnity of my vitality, and I will eternise my habitance in the Pavilion of Deity!"

Almost too bad, some readers may say, to satirize the departed worthy thus, but we shall yet have to say how we revere his memory, and the satire, if satire it be, is only introduced here for the purpose of saying that all fine and far-fetched words quench live coals.

As singular an appropriation of a text as we ever remember to have met with was made by an obscure old brother, or father minister of ours, in a little sea-board village, Seaford, on the coast of Sussex, upon the occasion of its remoteness and isolation being invaded by a railway laid in, and its attendant train rushing through its street. Our old friend *improved* the occasion by discoursing from Nahum ii. 4 : "Chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways, they shall seem like torches, they shall run like lightnings."

And among our many reminiscences of appropriate texts, we remember one especially. When we were a boy, Trinity Monday in Deptford was the great day of the Trinity House there—that celebrated old house in Church Street, known as Sayes Court, the house of John Evelyn, the great friend of Charles the First and of Bishop Jeremy Taylor. From this house it was the custom, on this day, for the masters of Trinity, of whom the Duke of Wellington was the head, to walk to our old parish church of St. Nicholas, to listen to a sermon. Our memory goes back to this particular Monday, when the masters emerged from Sayes Court, headed by the Duke of Wellington and his brother-in-arms Lord Hill—

nephew of old Rowland—in plain naval uniform. It is a pleasure to us to remember that we trotted along by the side of the Iron Duke, our head and memory full of Waterloo, to the old church, where the preacher was to be the then highly celebrated Henry Melvill, the Duke's chaplain, then in the full fame of his sonorous and trumpet-toned eloquence ; nor are we likely to forget how, as his rich tones rolled out his text, "Let him that is greatest among you be as one that serveth," the eyes of the whole congregation seemed involuntarily to turn to the corner of the old square pew where the victor of a hundred fields, the man who had conquered the greatest captain of any age and restored a generation of sovereigns to their thrones, sat, still, quiet, and quite unconscious, apparently, that the glancing of that crowd of eyes implied the sense that, humanly, he was assuredly the greatest there. But we must say, in honour of the distinguished preacher, that there was no further reference to the Duke ; on the contrary, it was a splendid piece of homage to the dignity of lowly service ; Melvill was no man for turning the pulpit, like Bossuet, into a vehicle of compliment or flattery.

Even good preaching must not, if usefulness and impression on the audience be intended, be too much in one strain. The differing characters and varying moods of men must be regarded. Take even the grandest oratorio ; would thousands be interested night after night with the declamation of a long succession of recitatives ? the wise musician knows better than that, and he breaks his great piece into many parts, varying airs and tones. The art of the

pulpit is neither the art of the essayist, nor of the logician, nor of the poet, nor of the philosopher, but an art very much its own, and it may be a combination of all these, an art in which manifold knowledge should be laid under contribution to meet in one discourse manifold character ; and, perhaps, then the preacher might think of Cicero's famous note of despair, "And who then can be an orator ?" And such despair is much more hopeful, and from it much more may be expected than from that which is, we fear, the more general sense, that everybody may be an orator, that anybody may preach ! An audience is not one being ; every hearer has a peculiarity, and this fact should be recognised. If we draw an illustration from the drama, its breadth of life is one source of its peculiar power ; everything is there, eloquence is there, and wit and humour are there, and strokes of pathos and feeling are there, and the picture and the music are there, and these are all human. The preacher should take his audience into his confidence, should employ his audience as the harpist employs the strings, as the pianist or the organist employs the keys ; it is not all in the organist—he cannot do without the organ ; or the harpist—he cannot do without the strings ; part is his, and part is theirs ; the wise player knows the touch, and there is wisdom in him perhaps deeper than his knowledge. All speech for a special work, or to have any special interest for men, must have its own accent, an accent which, if it be the speaker's own, makes itself intelligible in that it wins its way to the knowledge and apprehension of the hearer. For accent is the soul ; almost, we will

dare to say, where there is no accent there is no soul, no individuality ; just as has been often said, the style is the man, so, with more truth still, the accent is the man, it is his own mode of expression, his own level of speech. Every one who feels for himself has that which differs from another ; how different are real words, real prayers, but the accent is true. Some tongues are as if tipped with shafts of fire, and from some the doctrine distils as the dew ; some words swell as with wild, vehement passion, and some flow like Dorian music. How different are the hymns of Hannah and the hymn of Habakkuk ; the hymn of Deborah and the hymn of Mary, the mother of our Lord ; the accent of Isaiah and that of Jeremiah ; the accent of Paul and that of John ! But they are all real ; every real nature has its own accent, and the art of the certain sound, the art, the whole art of discriminative preaching may be defined as the art of accent. A serious man, aware that he has to preach, with a really earnest purpose, and looking out upon, it may be, a thousand persons before him, and desirous of rightly dividing the Word of God, giving to every one his portion of meat in due season, upon him comes something like that question which the disciples put to our Lord when He said, " Give ye them to eat," and they replied, " From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in this wilderness ? " Happy is the man who has so entered into the Divine secret that he is able to be the true minister of the great Bread-giver.

" Full soon celestially fed,
Their rustic fare they take ;

'Twas springtide when He blest the bread,
'Twas harvest when He brake.'

Ah! that quiet manner—is not this much in oratory? Noisy braggarts do but display usually their own heartlessness and ignorance, and all oratory may be said to be worthless in the very degree in which it is thus noisy. "A minister, on being asked why he preached less loudly than formerly, replied that he used to think it was the *thunder* that did the execution, but that he had discovered it was the *lightning*." How well we remember one of these quiet masters, James Parsons, the man of York, merely regarded as an orator, if not the greatest, certainly the most impressive pulpit orator we have ever known. Listening to him, the irresistible force of an exceedingly quiet power crept over one, through one; we felt the words tingling along the blood; it was as if dim spectral forms hovered before the eyes, *and still the magnetic stream runs on*. You suspend your breath in fixed feeling; not a word must be lost, for that might be *the word*; you are passive before the magnetist; your eye dilated to catch the vision rising before the spirit; you feel that the preacher's eye is on you; it fascinates you; you cannot release yourself from it, you would not if you could, and *still the magnetic stream runs on*. You surrender yourself to the dominion of your master; he clasps you in the slumber of genius, and now you are clairvoyant. It is the day of the final judgment! you see, or seem to see, a million snaky fires piercing through the windows of the old church; fold above fold, they coil in spiral press; the roof of the temple is rent; the whole

infinite is stretched before you ; each word from the preacher adds something to the terror of the impression, *for still the magnetic stream runs on.* He has launched you upon a sea of fire ; each word is arrowy, sharp-pointed, like live lightning. You feel that you are drifting on to some dreadful bourn, which yet you do not see ; at length *one word* falls upon the soul, more dreadful than a clap of thunder, another, another ! at those words you are whirled away, as in some dread tempest, through the fire-girt mountains ; you are oppressed by a sense of horrid darkness and most painful light, struggling together ; you do not feel that you are in the world of spirits, and that spirits are about you ; you do not feel at all, you do not think at all, you are there ; it is done, the award is fixed ; black, desolate shores lie all around, black, dread, surging seas, covered with the wrecked hulls of tempest-stricken vessels—and you ! you are doomed ; you are too agonised to shriek ; the suffocating emotion of despair is too intense to permit you to pray ; you are wrapped in a painful sense of conscious unconsciousness, from which you are roused, to your boundless gratitude and joy, by the ceasing of the flow of the magnetic stream. Two or three thousand people are unanimously coughing to confirm you in the half-belief that you are on earth, and in the pulpit before you, apparently ignorant that he has said anything remarkable, the preacher is collecting his electricity for another attack upon some other soul.

Nor thus alone that quiet manner borne along upon those quiet waves of voice ; the hearer visited far other scenes, was the subject of far other im-

pressions. The imagination of the preacher found itself peculiarly at home—as what imagination does not?—in the scenery of terror and of joy; and the voice of the preacher, it must be said, peculiarly adapted itself to the state of introvision in the mind of the hearer. It much resembled, not only in itself, but in its influences, the murmur and the music of mystical and unseen mountain torrents, and gradually you see word after word has unlocked a vista; the manner of the preacher was rapid, but every word, every pictorial word was distinct, not only in its enunciation, but in its varying accent. Hark! the preacher is talking to you of heaven. He takes you by the hand, and leads you thither. He utterly disclaims any assistance from the painter. He tells you that he will not have it that you shall derive your light from the canvas of Marvin or of Claude, or from the melody of Mozart or Handel, or the wildering pomp of Spenser or Milton; yet he pours around you, affluently, the ideas and conceptions drawn from their notes, colours, and visions; the *rippling waves of voice, like a stream*, have conducted you thither. Had they been loud or boisterous, you could have defied them; as it was, they hurried you along to a quiet cloudland; the lamps of the chapel glimmered and shone, like thrones. Through the blue deeps all impalpable, the haze of a golden light fell over you; you caught the distant warbling of hymns, and discerned, far off among hills of emerald and sapphire, the sea of gleaming glass. Winding your way still onward by the notes of the wave, you struck a path upward, to the clefts and heights of the tall Delectable Mountains. Angels crossed

your pathway ; a strange effulgence rested still above the awe of a sweet, assured, benignant presence all around, which seemed to say, "Come on ! Come up !" the restless fronts of far-off buildings seemed to touch stars, which, as you looked, became angels too ; a city shone in the distance, but with no gleaming battlement nor turret ; *and still the rippling stream* murmured us on. And now we neared heaven ; floods of harmony saluted us ; it was the land of Beulah, it was our Fatherland ; and now the lightnings in the *Voice* cleft, as it were, in twain the marble fortresses, and it stood revealed to us ; the spirit sank suffused, overwhelmed with the glory and the grandeur ; a coolness fell upon the soul ; it was the shadow of the Tree of Life beneath which we were sitting ; we arose, and found that we were within the gates of the chrysolite and the pearl, beyond the marble hall, and the alabaster court, with the fountain of the water of life flashing before us, and scattering upon us its blessed spray ; *and still the ripple had not ceased of our own wave* which had guided us thither. We heard it calling us still ; and now it sang, as it sported along, of deathless destinies, of the tides of future being, of the calm fields in the distance, of thrones unattained and unseen, and it seemed in itself as if in its own infinite world ; and we awoke, to find ourselves where we were, not, it seemed, so much because the wave had ceased playing, but because we had ceased to hear it in the far-off solitudes of heaven, to which it had conducted us.

We merely relate our own experience ; such was, beyond all question, the teaching of James Parsons as we heard it from thirty-five to forty-five years

since. That was a live coal ! That was a tongue of fire ! That pulpit was a throne of eloquence ! Can it be wondered at that we place the achievements of the pulpit by the side of the noblest efforts of the fine arts, the noblest powers of painting, statuary, architecture, and song, when we remember what we have felt beneath the witchery of its great enchantments, or that we are prepared to believe, and do easily believe the traditions and legends of the overmastering effects of eloquence from the lips of the mighty men many of whose names have passed before us in these pages ? We shall return more at length to James Parsons, and attempt to present something of his method and some of his glowing words, which, however, look poor beside their spoken power.

The power of a preacher greatly depends upon constantly keeping himself and his audience in the presence of essential truths. The business of a preacher is certainly with the mind, to instruct it ; but his most essential business is with the soul, to fertilize it. The mind is dependent upon faculties and organs. The soul has a knowledge which it never learned, instincts which are independent of faculties and organs, the sense of God, the sense of infinity, the sense of immortality, the sense and sentiment of the beautiful, the moral sense ; all these are strong primeval instincts common to the soul of man. Properly they do not belong to the intellect or the mind ; but it is upon the soul the preacher is especially to work. These faculties may be darkened. Cannot the mists of the earth obscure the light of the sun ? But they constitute in man

the region of the higher law. If these essential truths be not seen and firmly held, if the preacher think it his chief business to deal with facts, to argue, merely to store the memory, "those that look out of the windows" will be "darkened," and he will permit the most influential power over character which he possesses, the staff or sceptre of wisdom, to drop from his grasp. The things we are saying seem so obvious to us that we do greatly wonder how they can ever be, or have been, a matter of doubt. What has projected the mind of man, in any age, to a remote discovery? The soul, the seat of imagination, which has first dreamed, and surmised, and used its own immediate vision, and then called on the mind, with its judgment, and the hand, by its material presence, to give effect and personality to the vision. Oh! beyond everything, the preacher should be aware of, and seek to obtain a healthy influence over the *soul*.

What a power, for instance in human nature, is this element we call conscience!

Whom do we count the worst man upon earth?

"Be sure he *knows* in his conscience more
Of what right is, than arrives at birth,
In the best man's acts that we bow before ;
This last knows better, true, but the fact is,
'Tis one thing to know, and another to practise ;
And thence I conclude that the real God-function
Is to furnish a motive of injunction
For practising what we know already."

Some of the most illustrious and munificent monuments of human genius and industry have been called into existence by the dark enchant-

ments of conscience. Some time since, in Italy, we found ourselves traversing the aisles, the cloisters, of one of the most amazing, some say the most magnificent, receptacle of monastic art in Europe, although, being somewhat out of the way, missed by and unknown to most travellers. It is still a wonderful monument of artistic beauty, although it has stood in a vast Italian desert for four hundred years. Its vast loneliness calls to the mind of the visitor the descriptions of the Alhambra. It is a wonderful museum of paintings by the mighty masters, of sculpture, of mosaics, of basreliefs, and marbles ; of carvings in wood, and altars inlaid with precious stones ; of lofty bronze gates, so elaborate as to constitute them beautiful wonders in the history of art. Its magnificent refectory is probably surpassed by few halls in Europe. A truly magnificent pile, with its statues and turrets, its sacristries and lavatories ; a strange and stately fabric, almost unknown to the tides of travellers pouring through Italy ; it stands like a monastic Tadmor of the wilderness, or Palmyra of the desert. How came it there ? what reared it there, in that wild plain between Milan and Pavia ? It represents the worth of millions of English pounds. What freak of gloomy wealth caused this mighty marble palace, this beautiful hall of penitence to rise from the dusty wilderness ?

It was *conscience*, conscience set on fire by fear. An Italian nobleman, a count, had committed murder ; he had murdered an innocent wife in a fit of jealousy ; he had murdered her father and her brother. He was above all law, but the time

came when he became subject to another, and a subtle law. He became very much frightened at what he had done. He was uncertain "how soon or which way his great spirit might go," but he feared a very bad way. His victims seemed to scare him; they stood round his bed like terrible avenging furies. He wished to expiate his crimes, and this was the mode in which his conscience sought for peace; he tried thus to chase the dreadful remembrance from his soul. It is said to have cost him two millions of pounds, of the money of that day, to rear and to endow this ark of refuge for his troubled spirit. Whether he found peace after this enormous outlay we do not know, doubtful we should think, but it assuredly illustrates, as many another inferior instance illustrates, that this conscience is a tremendous and potent reality in human nature. Like the other senses in man, it also may be dosed and drowned with narcotics and the somnolent nepenthe, but it starts up in wild affright, and takes a fearful revenge at last. Now this faculty of conscience, in spite of all the casuistries and sophistries which have sought satisfactorily to dispose of it through all ages, has made its presence and its power felt in man as a disturbing medium. It seems certain that many are altogether unaware of it; they are "past feeling, given over"; but it is equally certain that many innumerable millions have, through all ages, felt that conscience, which we may define to be the unhealthy and unhappy knowledge the soul has of itself, is, in a marvellous and quite ineffable manner, met by that new life in the Christian system the life of

Christ, the real life, which it is the business of the able minister of the New Testament to expound, unveil, and apply.

How difficult a work it is to deal with this conscience! Far are we from saying that here preachers have always been wise physicians; on the contrary, and often, how unwise! It is true that every mind, as John Foster has said, has an interior apartment of its own, into which none but itself and God can enter; the preacher cannot enter, but he can dart strange rays which stream through the windows of the apartment, and by the light of which even the possessor becomes aware of the secrets of the chamber, hitherto unsuspected by himself, perhaps leading him to exclaim, "Thou settest mine iniquities before me, my secret sins in the light of Thy countenance," for there, in that interior apartment, in solitary state, sits conscience, surrounded by judicial terrors. It is possible to vex, to irritate, even to appal conscience herself in a most unhealthy manner, and many ministers and teachers most unwisely do this, and raise a terror they cannot allay; overstrained, exaggerated statements and unrealized sentiments, made to dart from the speaker's imagination like spectres and phantasms, often do this. In a word, conscience is so tremendous a power in man that it needs a most delicate touch, and it is worthy of a diagnosis and study so as to enable a teacher healthfully to vitalise it, while withholding the hand from lacerating it with perhaps incurable wounds.

And here, on the other hand, it may be said those are cold and depressing views of human nature which the modern analytic philosophy has

shed abroad ; the same deathly views have penetrated the study of the minister and the pulpit of the church, and we must say all power fades from the pulpit if the new metaphysics, concerning the nature of man and the inspired truths of the Christian system, are permitted to obtain a hold on the mind, and the ancient verities to fall from the grasp of the preacher's thought ; it ought not to be difficult to dismiss the depersonalizing ideas of modern metaphysics, even with contempt, from the understanding.

It is everything to feel, to know ; the minister who would be effective *must* know, that the human life *will not* be placed on a physical basis, that it essentially descends from highest to lowest, and "to God," as the old Arabic proverb says, "belongs the return" ; the body cannot look after the mind, it cannot even look after itself, but the mind looks after both, and the soul looks after the mind ; there cannot be health of body without health of mind, nor health of mind without the health of the soul, the sense of duty and love of truth.

CHAPTER XI. •

THE HEALTHFUL DIVINE—ALEXANDER WAUGH.

THE name of Alexander Waugh is one to which few living memories can turn back. Considerably more than half a century has passed away since he went to his rest, but a dim, indistinct, and hazy sight we still have of him; and the memory of the fervid lamentations amidst which he was borne to his grave, the charm which seems to surround his name whenever it is mentioned, and the evident unction and graciousness which united, and gave sweetness, strength, and majesty to all his manifold gifts, compel us to recur to him. We have talked with men, wise men, able men, who have said to us, they would rather resemble Alexander Waugh than any other minister of whom they had ever heard or known. Some such impression is on our own mind too. Mighty as an orator, his whole life was so suffused in a halo of such enviable goodness, such thoroughly human beauty, that he suggests to us, certainly, the highly desirable, with this attribute, however, that he is almost the inimitable. It is not a very easy thing, without a pair of compasses, to describe a circle; and some characters

seem to leave imitations just as far behind as most such unskilled attempts.

Born in Scotland, in 1754, settled as a pastor over a united Presbyterian Church in London in 1782, for forty-six years he was a man of very considerable mark in the metropolis. The pulpit of the Church of Christ has very many varieties of excellence and honoured eminence, but we scarcely know where to find the exact likeness to Alexander Waugh. He commanded a very large circle of influence ; his powers of eloquence were great, but all the traditions of him seem to point to his spirit ; to the majestic loveliness of his nature, the clear, bright common-sense, mellowed and made tender by the play and sprightliness of a soul which could "rejoice with those who rejoiced," and "weep with those who wept," and never cross the boundary line of truth or consistency, however ready with the sallies of wit or the gaieties of humour. So changed are all the circumstances of the Church, so changed is the structure of the ministerial mind, that a man like Dr. Waugh looks almost as remote as an old knight in the chivalry of the middle ages ; we seem to build up the man into the minister upon a different principle of mental architecture now, but it may be questioned if the method be better. Alexander Waugh came of a stock of farmers from Berwickshire ; his early days were passed, literally and exactly, in such scenes as those described in the "Cottar's Saturday Night" ; he came from an old upland farm, amongst the wild heaths, moss haggs, and grey old stones of wild Scotland, and he never forgot it ; and the old scenes

of his boyhood gave pathos and the charm of descriptive power to his eloquence, not only very effective over a general audience, but especially captivating to the Scotchman who found himself translated from his mountain heaths and moors to the more monotonous streets of London. From his father's simple farm he went away to grammar schools and colleges ; and, before his separation for the ministry, some ten years had been passed in a thorough course of real preparation—his theological preparation under the direction of the well-known John Brown, of Haddington. He had been well drilled in his “Humanities” ; he stepped into the ministry, his mind nimble and alert in Latin lore, and in the ready handling of his Greek Testament.

How is it that Scotch ministers often strike us as so much more thoroughly furnished than the average English minister ? The education does not appear to have been hurried, does not give the idea of having crammed for a degree ; that early habituation to, and familiarity with, Latin, what a clearness and copiousness, and yet what a condensation, it seems to give to a style ! The men who have lived and breathed in scholarly airs seem to have something imparted to them which never forsakes them. Learned dunces of course grow everywhere ; but where there is a mind to make the culture its own, how strong it becomes upon such nurture. Perhaps the man's engagements in life compel him to leave it all behind him, either for business or recreation ; but it has given a mode and fashion of strength and clearness to his speech which abides ; it imparts a tone and a peculiar

aroma to his style ; so it was with Alexander Waugh. And with what pleasure the ear catches some old familiar Latin passage, some happy application of a well-known line, to translate which would be to rob it of its richness, even of its pith and point ! So was the man equipped for his work. The scholarship of our ministers often seems slipshod ; you shall find that they have read a book of Livy, or some pages of Thucydides, or some single oration of Demosthenes ; but they know nothing of the volumes of the author—they have never read them so as to make themselves in a manner at home with them ; and the reading in other departments is often like this. The modern student is left very much to make himself : he takes his own favourite theory, his own favourite author and master of speculations ; there is not the careful going down to the depths and going all round the subject ; and so he steps, very frequently, into the world, and before his audiences, and into society, a loose-jointed and really unfurnished man.

Alexander Waugh had the foundations of his character and great influence laid in a very different manner ; and early thoroughness is one of the first things that strikes us as belonging to him. Before he began to preach, years had been given to him to learn. There was no doubt a depth of nature in the man himself—passionately fond of nature—rising early to walk far, to drink in the healthful breeze of moorlands, the music of resounding cataracts and waterfalls, and the sublimity of crags re-echoing to the roar of torrents ; with this that which seems very essential to the making a humane

man in after-life—a love of fun as a youth, a cheerful, buoyant, overflowing nature.

There is too much of the chance entrance upon the ministry ; and many young men come amongst their fellows as instructors like ragged colts or rough Shetland ponies ; and such may be not unuseful. But, to take a place among men, to have acquired habits of obedience and discipline, in virtue of which alone a man can govern other men, to have acquired habits of scholarship and behaviour which give the repose, the reserve, and the urbanity of a gentleman—these are not attained by two or three years spent in an academy after a rude apprenticeship in business. And the superior respect which a Scotch minister usually commands arises from the fact that he has usually had his long course of training, and comes before men with strong and highly accredited credentials ; and Alexander Waugh was an illustration of all this, and the value of this.

As a preacher, very opposite critics gave to Dr. Waugh their highest appreciation. William Jay said of him : “ All our young ministers and candidates for the ministry ought to hear Waugh ; use all your influence to induce them to do so.” Robert Hall heard him, and declared the sermon the most brilliant he had ever listened to. “ I never,” continued he, “ heard a discourse containing so many brilliant and beautiful things.” A friend remarked, that he had heard of the sermon having been preached somewhere in Scotland. Mr. Hall replied: “ I doubt not that it has travelled in the greatness of its strength ” ; and then he continued to speak of

it as "distinguished, not by its continuity of thought, or by a chain of reasoning, but by the splendour of its thought and the exuberance of its imagery." And this does very greatly describe the general character of his ministrations. His appearance was always commanding ; he had a presence of great natural dignity. As middle life and age came on, his dignity became richly venerable ; abounding in natural images, he used them with exceeding taste and delicacy. Although a Lowlander himself, he was intensely national, and had something of the grandeur of a Highland chieftain. His preaching was coloured by all the scenery of his native land—torrents, lakes, craggy cliffs, and heaths ; it was like visiting Scotland, or as if the Scotchman returned to the land of his birth, to hear him preach. It was said that he made of importance the little hill or brae, the silent rock, or the bosky burn, which furnished such sweet and tender reminiscences to many a poor man or woman whose childhood had been passed amidst such scenes ; he drew forth their beauties by his picturesque sketches. Frequently alive in the scenery of Ben Lomond, Ben Nevis, Glen Garry, the Spey or the Tay ; calling up the pastoral recollections of Teviot Dale or Lammermuir, the Cheviot or the Pentland Hills, Mithdale or Stichelldale,—he was equally alive in historical associations : in the field of Flodden, or the feudal days of Percy or of Douglas. Often, by some tender and touching allusion, he made the hearts of his auditors to beat ; and he kept his mind thus awake and alive by his intense nationality. His recreation seems to have been, at the close of the

day, to sit with his family, recalling old Scottish scenes ; and every book referring at all to Scottish manners, scenery, or character, was sure to find its way into his hands, and, during the winter evenings, was most likely read aloud.

When he noted the absence of any of his people from the services without some sufficient cause, or, perhaps, was reminded of the distance they resided from the chapel as an excuse, he would often exclaim : "What ! you from Scotland, from Melrose, from Gala Water, from Selkirk, and it's a hard matter to walk a mile or two to serve your Maker one day in the week ! How many miles did ye walk at Selkirk ?" "Five." "Five ! and can ye no' walk two here ? Man, your father walked ten or twall out and as many hame every Sunday i' the year, and yer mither too, aften : I've seen a hunder folk or mair, and they walk six or seven, men and women and bairns too ; and at the sacraments folks walk fifteen, and some twenty, miles. How far will ye walk the morn to make half a crown ? Fie, fie ! Oh, my man, mind the bairns ! If ye love their souls, dinna let them get into the way o' biding awa' from kirk."

His eye was always animated and full of light ; he was at home in preaching on the strayed sheep ; then came forth his pastoral remarks on hills and dales, bogs and marshes, becks and shores, and how the poor wanderer, though it should be hunted by the prowling wolf or the cunning fox ; though it should wander into the wildest wastes of the Lammermuir, or ascend to the highest summits of the Cheviot Fells, must still be brought back by the good shepherd.

Some of his friends characterized his preaching as more devotional than profound, more eloquent than controversial, and more energetic than critical ; but what he himself said of some other preacher not inaptly describes himself—" He has so much of God about him, that he runs away with my heart." There was nothing fine about him ; a sublime and elevated devotion melted down all insensibility and scepticism ; he was, perhaps, even greater in the service of public prayer than as a preacher, and was often called upon to take the part of prayer in special services. The characteristic quality of his mind was sublimity, mellowed and softened by a genial humour. In the services of devotion, this sublimity of conception and expression appeared to reach its height in ardour and reverence ; his own feelings seemed to be, in such services, readily moved ; the big tear was seen to trickle down his cheek, while some emotion of lofty adoration, penitential abasement, believing confidence, or filial gratitude gave fervour and fulness to his expressions. Modes of expression continued in the memory of hearers long years after they were uttered. A poor woman tells how she never forgot his expression concerning the love of Christ. " It is deep," he said, " as the grave in which He lay, high as the heaven to which He ascended, ancient as eternity, and lasting as your souls." It seemed he never allowed a sermon to pass without some tender allusion or illustration : thus, on "*The bruised reed He will not break.*" " The Good Shepherd mends, not breaks His reeds when they are bruised. I have seen a Highland shepherd, on a sunny brae, piping as if he

could never grow old, his flock listening, and the rocks ringing around him ; but when the reed of his pipe became hoarse, he had not patience to mend it, but broke it, and threw it away in anger, and made another. Not so our Shepherd : He examines, and tries, and mends, and tunes the bruised spirit, until it sings sweetly of mercy and judgment as in the days of old." Often, too,—usually in every sermon,—he compelled to his service a grand way of speech, as when he exclaimed : " Could I place the prophet Isaiah at the base of one of the loftiest of the eastern mountains, and whilst he was gazing on its varied scenery, were an earthquake to rock it upon its deep foundations, until, like the Numidian lion shaking the dew-drops from his mane in the morning, it threw off from its hoary and heaving sides the forests, and flocks, and hamlets, and vineyards ; and were a whirlwind to rush in at that moment, scattering the broken and falling masses in mid-air, still the voice of the prophet, if it could be heard amidst the convulsions of nature, would exclaim : ' Though the everlasting mountains bow, and the perpetual hills be scattered, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.'"

The following is a pretty illustration of the Psalms of David ; but it shows how he was wont to make his sentiments ring with some national word :—

" David, Asaph, etc., having put down the sentiments contained in the words of the Psalms, sent them to Jeduthun, by whom they were adapted to, and became constituent parts in, the worship of the Jewish Church. As such, our Lord and His apostles acknowledged them ; and on the cross our Redeemer began one of them, the con-

tinuing of which His sufferings prevented. All other songs fall infinitely beneath these, being liable to mislead ; but in these songs there is no fear of mistake in the sentiments they convey. In David's songs there are no feeble parts ; and he gives credit to his reader for perception in their perusal, without those links to connect the different parts which moderns find it needful to introduce. His mind catches the prominent beauties as they rise before him. Like the roebuck, bounding from rock to rock, regardless of the spaces that intervene, many of those sacred songs contained or explained the history of their country, and recorded the deeds of their ancestors ; and who would not be fired in singing the deeds of Bannockburn, of Marston Moor, or Waterloo?"

He gave a pretty, powerful, and pathetic turn to his words. Thus, speaking of the hope of a heavenly inheritance in adverse circumstances, he says : " Nobody that sees that poor old man, just come from the Isle of Patmos, with the mark of the irons on his withered arms, would expect that he had any great prospects ; yet he could say, '*Have fellowship with us !*' 'What !' a man might say, looking at the mark of the chain upon his wrist, '*have fellowship with you !* What profit will that be ?' '*Truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It doth not then indeed appear what he should be,*' nor will the world give us credit for our pretensions."

Such are the broken and scattered illustrations of his mode of speech ; wise words, weighty words, comfortable words.

But what about the place or power of Dr. Waugh in the pulpit ? We know it was eminent,

although it was a day when sermons were neither systematically pillaged, stolen, nor published by shorthand writers, nor so fastidiously prepared and printed by the authors themselves as now, and we believe Dr. Waugh published no sermons at all. His power in the pulpit, and the great range of that loving reputation he enjoyed, arose in an eminent degree from the overflowing kindness, the shrewd, cheerful, tender humanity of the man. It has been said again and again that he was never known to speak a word of personal detraction ; but his tongue was always ready as a shield, if it were possible to use it so. Seated amidst his elders, in his vestry, one evening, a stranger came to make inquiry respecting some particular point in the character of a member in his congregation ; to the extent of the inquiry Dr. Waugh gave a true and most satisfactory answer, but carefully refrained from passing any judgment on the general character. On the inquirer retiring, one of the elders, an excellent man, cautioned him in these terms : " You know, sir, our Doctor never speaks ill o' ony man ; indeed, I verily believe, if Satan himself were to ask him for a night's lodging on a cauld night, he wouldna refuse him." Dr. Waugh cast a mildly rebuking look at the speaker, and said, " Ah, my man, my man, I much fear that you and I have often given him a night's lodging, without his speering (asking) our leave." There is a pretty story of a like kind, which first appeared, soon after Dr. Waugh's death, in *The Eclectic Review*. A young man of holy and unimpeachable character was desirous of entering upon missionary labour, and was warmly recommended to

the notice of the London Missionary Society. He passed through the usual examination, but stated that he had one difficulty—he had an aged mother dependent upon an elder brother and himself for maintenance ; in case of his brother's death, and his mother being still alive, he wished to be at liberty to return home to support her. Scarcely had he made this natural and pathetic request, than the harsh voice of one of the Directors exclaimed, " If you love your mother more than the Lord Jesus Christ, you won't do for us." The young man was abashed and confounded, and he was requested to retire while the Committee took his proposal into consideration. Upon his return, Dr. Waugh, who was in the chair, addressed him with patriarchal dignity, telling him that the Committee did not feel themselves at liberty to accept his services on a condition involving uncertainty as to the term, but immediately added, " We think none the worse of you, my good lad, for your beautiful regard to your aged parent ; you are following the example of Him whose gospel you wish to proclaim among the heathen, and who, when He hung upon the cross in dying agonies, beholding His mother and His beloved disciple standing by, said to the one, ' Behold thy son ! ' and to John, ' Behold thy mother ! ' My good lad, we think none the worse of you." Tenderness and sympathy were always ready to flow forth from the lip or the pen of this admirable man. It has been well said he had a vivid fancy, but it did not sparkle with a cold brilliancy like the particles which glitter on the snow when it is shone upon by the wintry sun ; his kindly fancy radiated a

warmth into the heart which needed his ministration. Some of his words are very sweet.

“*The death of children.*—Our children are more God’s than ours ; He hides the tender plants in the grave till the storms of this wintry life have passed away ; and in the morning of the resurrection He will lift them up and convey them to a more genial soil, where through eternity they shall blossom to the honour of their Saviour.”

“*Medicine for sorrow.*—Exercise in the open air ; cheerful but holy conversation with Christian friends ; a habit of dwelling upon the luminous spots of our life, by which our gratitude to God is enlivened, and our own joy augmented ; intercourse with God in reading His blessed word, and in devotion and prayer,—all support and strengthen the mind under suffering.”

“*Sympathy.*—Community of trials unites human hearts, as fire unites metals.”

“*He ever liveth.*—When you and I die, Providence will not be buried in our grave ; the ‘Redeemer liveth.’ We entrust to Him our eternal life ; shall we not entrust to Him our dearest earthly relatives ? He will be a Husband to my beloved wife and a Father to my children when I can no longer look after them ; His gracious presence will cheer them in solitude, shield them in danger, guide their inexperience through untrodden paths in the darkest night, wipe away the tear which my hand cannot wipe away, and minister instruction when my lips can minister no more.”

“*Beyond the river.*—Our Father is leading us home ; and the more rough and rugged the road near its close, the more we shall relish the greensward beyond the grave. Could we look upwards with a steadier and more ardent eye, we should scarce feel the fluctuations of this changeable scene. When a man feels dizzy in riding through a torrent by looking down on the stream, the best way to restore his

head to calmness is to fix his eye on the stationary objects on the other side of the river."

"*Melancholy.*—Melancholy will grow into a disease unless we check its progress; it enfeebles the mind to bear, while it adds to the burden."

"*Departed friends.*—It is not so much the innate worth and beauty of objects that gives them influence, as the habit of thinking on them and bringing them near to the mind. Now this is always in our power; we may walk with our departed friends, and hold rational and devout converse with their spirits, without the medium of body. It is thus we hold fellowship with the Redeemer Himself, whom now, though we see not, we supremely love, and in whom we fully confide."

Such are illustrations of a manner of speech which, as it was very familiar to him, so we may be sure it met the sorrows and needs of human hearts everywhere. We have been desirous of remarking that it was in the power of his tenderness, his gracious and promptly sympathetic spirit, his strength very greatly consisted. What a man is in the social scene, in the homes of joy or of sorrow, must very greatly influence his pulpit character and career. Often how far men are away from their people when they are in the pulpit! How far they are away from their people, too often, when preparing for the pulpit! A scheme of remote thought, a framework of cold and glittering language. There are men who hammer at their poor heads all the week, that something may be produced on the Sabbath day. It is a grand thing to be a genial preacher, to utter the words which come down like rain; surely it implies much in character. It need

not partake of that familiarity which makes either a character or a subject contemptible. The smile and the unction may possess repose and majesty ; and this was the case with the subject of this chapter. Dr. Waugh, as we have seen, had well rooted and grounded his mind before he entered on the ministry ; and then, for a long time, he prepared by close and earnest study, but soon came to live so active a life, that his preaching became very much extemporary, contenting himself with a brief outline of his train of thought and the illustrations by which it was to be pressed home. Great as he was as a preacher, his pastoral cares were very heavy, conjoined to his large connection with religious societies, then commencing that mighty operation and organization which have now become so powerful and almost bewildering. It is said that in his work of visitation and pastoral and public labour, he generally left home by nine or ten in the morning, and did not return till night ; this was his usual routine for every day in the week except Saturday. Such a man must have a very ready mind, resources within himself easily at command. The question may occur, whether any man has a right to preach to whom it is not easy to preach, especially when life has matured his years to him. And Dr. Waugh belonged to that old routine of things when the minister did preach three times every Sabbath ; sometimes circumstances occurred compelling him to preach four times ; but, after the fatigues of the Sabbath, he would say, "If I do not hurt preaching, preaching will never hurt me !" Sometimes at supper, when his wife or children would press upon

his weariness the glass of wine, tears rushed into his eyes, and he would say, "Oh, my dear children, how grateful your poor old father ought to be ; there is many a brother minister to-night in Scotland, and especially in the Highlands, as tired as I am, but who has very few of my comforts round him." Such an example, whatever else we may have attained in the way of public ministration, we have not outgrown ; and we believe a careful study of the character and the power of Dr. Waugh, and the kind of influence he exercised, would be a most healthful and animating example to many a young minister. It is a life, a character, and a kind of pulpit ministration which seem to leave nothing to be desired. He lived in, and for, the ministry. Some ministers now have learned to live less in their ministry than in many other departments of labour—good, honourable, and much more profitable, perhaps, to the worldly income, but in the pursuit of which the minister's work must especially suffer.

Humour was a pleasant light in the character of Dr. Waugh ; a man entirely destitute of it can never be a very agreeable character. We have often remarked upon it that it gives the genial atmosphere to life and speech ; a man without it must be very sharp and angular. Many possess it who do not know very well how to balance it, either in public or private ; and it becomes coarse. In a character in which large self-respect predominates in conjunction with humour, good taste and good sense will never be violated, and the piquant remark will seldom sink to drollery, while it will have point and pith in its pleasantry. Once, at an annual dinner of one of

our great public schools, Dr. Waugh's health having been drunk, in returning thanks he dwelt at some length on the influence of scenery in forming character. From the scenery immediately surrounding the school, he turned to expatiate upon the scenery of Scotland, and its effect on the minds of his countrymen. In the midst of his remarks the company was shocked by the loud and obstreperous laughter of two young gentlemen present ; loud expressions of disapprobation arose from all the company. The Doctor, assuming the richest and most soothing of the Scottish tones, exclaimed, " Be not angry, gentlemen, be not angry ; rather pity the lads than blame, for it was not the laugh of contempt, but the laugh of ignorance, and ignorance always claims your pity ; and ken ye not that the puir bairns have never been in Scotland ?" He did not often indulge in wit, he was too purely and simply good-natured ; and he always pushed aside any scandal, and prevented an unkind criticism. It was noticeable, that in speaking of preachers, any especially who happened to take his place in his absence from his own pulpit, he never said,—" How did Mr. —— preach to-day ?" but, " Well, I am sure good Mr. —— gave you an excellent sermon." Such natures can of course express themselves angrily, vehemently ; nor are there wanting passages which show his possession of this power. Referring to the number of persons who were opposed to religion from its opposition to their own characters, he once said, " It was a severe retort which a young man lately made to an infidel who was speaking against the Divine legation of Moses. He had made many objections

to the character of that holy man, and the young Christian said to him, 'There is something in the history of Moses that will warrant your opposition to him more than anything you have yet said.' 'What ever could this be?' the sceptic inquired. '*He wrote the Ten Commandments.*'"

As we have said of Dr. Waugh, we have little more than his life. He published no sermons; but in the long run does that matter very much? We, on the contrary, have an avidity to preach through the press; printing is so cheapened. There must have been some extra happiness in preaching in those days, when the preacher did not feel that the eye of the critic was upon him, carefully noting down every flaw or fault of expression, and hurrying away to accuse him of some want of taste through the columns of religious, or other papers. This ministration to self-consciousness has very greatly slain pulpit usefulness; and the genius of doing good has shrunk abashed before the genius of fastidiousness. How simply the old fathers, like Dr. Waugh, pursued their way; they had no proof sheets to correct. It was enough for them to give full proof of their ministry. Now, even the obscure minister, who has no great gift at all, longs to live in print, and hopes to secure, by some volume of some weekly Pulpit or other, a niche in some future generation. Probably by all this more is lost than gained: usually simplicity is lost, unconscious activity is lost; the man becomes morbid from the sense of self-exaggeration, the notion that the great eye of opinion, critical opinion, is upon him. Very few are able to loose themselves from these bands; but, even

now, those who are able would win for themselves a large heritage of usefulness and honour. It is the large heart which informs the mind, not an analytical or critical disposition or disquisition—knowledge of men and of the world following on the discipline derived from a well-ordered and well-rooted knowledge of studies and books. In the sense that the subject of this chapter furnishes one of the most admirable models of a perfectly rounded ministerial character, we have turned aside from living voices to listen to his. He was wont to regard it as one of his highest treats and most suggestive lessons to visit, and linger among the tombs and aisles of Westminster Abbey. For himself, he desired that he might repose by the grave of his father and mother, with a heath-bush at the head of his place of rest, and only the heath sod for its covering. It was not in such a place he was to lie down ; but, when this simple minister of a then obscure sect and a small chapel was borne to his last abode in Bunhill Fields, followed by an immense procession wending its long way, following between forty and fifty mourning coaches, and thirteen private carriages, attended by the representative ministers of all denominations in the metropolis, it surely might suggest then, as it suggests now, the question,—By what means did he win so much respect in life as to command such an ovation in death ? The answer is simple. His mind was sturdy and strong, his scholarship ample and sufficient, his eloquence ready and great ; but the commanding secret of his usefulness and the affection with which he was regarded was the simplicity of his

character, arising from a large, loving, and overflowing heart.

As we close these reminiscences, we have no doubt that Alexander Waugh was a "live coal" from the altar; his tongue might be frequently called "a tongue of fire," but his doctrine, assuredly, and invariably, "distilled as the dew."

CHAPTER XII.

LIVE COALS AND DRY STICKS. — THE ART OF OBSCURITY AND THE SCIENCE OF CLEARNESS.

THE dryness of sermons is proverbial, and has been made the subject of many a joke, from the time of that worthy of whom one of his people said, "Well, if another flood should come on the earth, and they could get on one of his sermons, they would find a dry place at any rate;" or that old Scotch preacher who, going to kirk through the rain, and shaking off the wet on the church porch, said to his sexton, "Sandy, my man, I'm vara *weet*." "Ay, sir," replied the sexton, "but gang yer ways up into the pulpit, and ye'll be dry enough there." And therefore we have put together obscurity and dryness; men are always dry when they are desultory and obscure, and an audience will listen with pleasure, even for some length of time, to a man who conveys his thoughts with clearness and perspicuity. Is not perspicuity one of the first duties in a speaker?

We suppose, when we talk of dry sticks, there is no topic more naturally suggested to the mind than the question of "the length of the sermon." How long should the sermon be? And no doubt, first, the

length of the sermon has much to do with its dryness. When we were a child we never heard a sermon which was closed within the space of an hour and a quarter. Prodigiously long have some sermons been, even meandering away for hours ; on the other hand, some have been just as remarkable for their brevity ; and, notwithstanding the almost interminable length to which some preachers have extended their discourses, there seems little doubt that the balance of opinion in most ages has been in favour of the short discourse. Preaching in the early Church was short ; it is probable that Chrysostom's famous words seldom ran on beyond a period of a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. In our own day the Abbé Mullois, a distinguished dignitary of the Romish Church and the private chaplain to the late Emperor Napoleon the Third, in his very instructive book on preaching, insists upon it that the sermon should not extend beyond seven or ten minutes ; he says, " Much more can be said in two minutes than is generally thought, when due preparation is made, when we have a good knowledge of mankind and are well versed in the subject." And he continues, " A sermon must not be a bore ; even mediocre preachers are acceptable provided their discourses are short, whereas the very best preachers are a burden when they speak too long." And yet brevity may be, and often has been wearisome when conjoined to a purposeless prolixity of manner. Our readers will remember the word of Horace, "*Esto Brevis*" : Be short. But then he says again, "*Brevis esse labore, obscurus fio*" : I labour to be short, I become obscure. And yet

Luther's maxims were all good ones—"Stand up cheerfully ; speak up manfully ; *leave off speedily*."

When George Canning, the great orator and statesman, heard Dr. Legge, the Bishop of Oxford of his day, after the service this preacher inquired of Canning, "How did you like my sermon?" "I thought it was short," he replied. "I am aware it was short," said the prelate, "but I was afraid of being tedious." "But you were *tedious*," said Canning; "you *were* tedious!" And there is another well-known story of a late Marquis of Normanby, who, when he was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, at the close of a service, said to his chaplain, "There were some things in the course of your sermon to-day, sir, which I never heard before." The chaplain professed himself flattered, but he modestly repelled the impeachment of originality, saying that the subject scarcely admitted any novelty of treatment, so that he would be glad to know what points they were which had struck his Lordship. "Yes," resumed the peer, "there were some things which, in those relations, I never heard before—I heard the clock strike twice."

Long sermons, we may suppose, do certainly not stand high in favour with audiences, old or young. That minister must doubtless have been surprised when, questioning his Sunday-school concerning the story of Eutychus,—the young man who, listening to the preaching of the Apostle Paul, fell asleep, and falling down, was taken up dead,—he said, "What do we learn from this very solemn event?" and a little creature replied, "Please, sir, ministers should learn not to preach long sermons!" It was scarcely

the lesson the ministerial catechist intended or expected.

But obscurity ?

Let us still remember—“Not smoke, but light.” This is a motto from Horace which we may take into the pulpit. If we cannot give light there, we had far better keep away ; or, if there, we had far better read a chapter or a text, and then be silent ; there may be a hope that this will make its way. When we go into a Papist place of worship we are often steeped in a stench of musk and aloes. “Oh !” we say, “would that there were only real human words here, real human feelings here ; these stenches are not the prayers of the saints.” We sit still, and presently rises the long, almost inarticulate, and inaudible mumbling and muttering of the Latin. “Oh !” we say, “this is but an unknown tongue.” And what is that better which is but a smoke of speech ? It is so of many preachers, that all they have contrived to do by their words is to reverse the canon of Horace, and to obtain smoke from light. They have turned the very New Testament itself into darkness. Thus, often either with wild, fanciful, mystical interpretations, or with misty metaphysics, with long and complicated words, with a vehement and noisy manner, the subject was plain enough when the preacher began, but dark enough at the close, because he did not remember the maxim : “Not smoke but light.” A rare volume might be filled, and the materials are close at our hand, with illustrations of nonsense sermons.

M. Mullois quotes the well-known anecdote of Louis XIV. in the chapel at Versailles, when some

preacher took the occasion boldly to inveigh against the vices and the peculiar dangers of the great, and at length exclaimed, "Woe to the rich! Woe to the great!" The courtiers murmured, although the king had lowered his eyes; after the sermon, they gathered round the monarch, and talked of the impertinence of the preacher, and of reprimanding him for his temerity. The king quietly said, "Gentlemen, the preacher has done his duty; now let us do ours." It is one of the most natural and simple sayings recorded of Louis XIV. Not to shine on pages should be the ambition of the preacher; he lives in a voice, and the voice expires. The mighty masters and mistresses of song know this, and are content to act upon it; Malibran, Braham, Jenny Lind, and Sims Reeves can have no posthumous fame. The music they hold in their hands is just the same as we have in our drawing-rooms. They live in the moment, but then, in their world, it is a very great moment. The soul interprets, and fills out, and gives the rest and the movement to each bar; this is their business. We have no doubt that the pulpit has suffered greatly by shorthand writers, the taking down of sermons, the incessant publication of sermons, the fastidiousness that waits on nicely-balanced images and harmoniously-constructed sentences. All this interferes with, and robs the address of its accent of conviction; the orator can no more survive than the singer. Our bookshelves groan beneath the weight of voluminous tomes, which originally found their expression in sermons; and during the last few years the publication of sermons has broken out with astonishing vigour.

There is a simple reason for this. If an edition of sermons be, on the average, of all books least likely to be read, it is also, on the average, of all books most certain to be sold. Any preacher in tolerable favour can command an audience not only for his tongue, but for his pen. It must be admitted, and most readers very well know it, that there is an amazing difference between the successful and impressive word in the pulpit and success and impression in the arm-chair by the fireside. It is quite amusing to hear how stoutly people will insist upon it that a sermon is not all printed, and give vent to their disappointment in reading that to which they had listened with so much pleasure. Of course, as we have said before, all is not printed ; manner cannot be printed, nor accent, nor a thousand little particulars which go to make up the undefinable charm. Words in their delivery seem so much more full, so much more copious and comprehensive ; and audiences yearn to receive a sermon, under the impression that it will be as much to them in coldly reading as when it leaped red-hot from the sympathetic furnace of the speaker's soul. They yearn to read it, and yawn over it. Printed sermons in general can be little better than decanted soda-water a day old.

Great sermons which have thus moved us to all our depths, we have desired to see in print ; perhaps they were very well, probably very poor indeed ; in any case, how different from that ineffable flight of soul, the searching, penetrating words we heard. This is exactly as it ought to be, no stronger proof, to those who did not hear, that the

man was really at home in his work. Whitefield's sermons are very poor things to read compared with their overwhelming power. Oratory is neither in writing, acting, nor even speaking. Where is the fragrance of a flower? Where are the tones of a harp? They were there, here, they are gone, you cannot catch them; it is so with the accent of conviction. This is the fragrance and the music of a sermon good for anything; and although we have taken high illustrations, we again say that this sacred fire may burn on the altar of any soul itself persuaded and impressed. Of course, when it is really a great soul as well as a sanctified one—a David, a St. Bernard, or an Edward Irving—the conviction accumulated, and on fire through all the faculties of a great nature, proportionately compels the audience to tremble and thrill.

And it comes out of this that the sermon will be plain. M. Mullois has several chapters with such headings as the following:—"The Sermon should be popular"; "The Sermon should be plain"; "The Sermon should be short." Another chapter follows on "Fact and kindliness," and on "Interest, emotion, and animation." Now, in reality, while all these topics are worthy of separate thought and enforcement, they all are related to those two canons on which we have dwelt already: that to address men well, they must be loved much; and that to persuade them, there must be on the speaker's tongue the accent of conviction. All this results, in fact, we believe, from the over full soul—all superfluity flows from a full heart. There is a twofold sense in which it is true that "out of the abundance of the heart

the mouth speaketh.” The heart not only constrains, it restrains ; artificial speech always lacks the real flavour and force which the heart gives to words, and certainly it is not to be supposed that words—words—mere words alone, either indicate the full heart, or the ability to reach the heart. This fulness, or Divine *pleroma*, is not indicated by the organ of language. The late Dr. James Alexander says : “ I listened yesterday to a sermon, and I am glad I do not know the preacher’s name ; it was twenty-five minutes long ; all the matter might have been uttered in five ; it was like what the ladies call ‘ trifle ’—all sweetness and froth, except a modicum of cake at the bottom—it was, doubtless, spoken *extempore*.” When a young clergyman once inquired of Dr. Bellamy “ what he should do to have matter for his discourses,” the shrewd old gentleman replied, “ Fill up the cask ; *fill up the cask* ; FILL UP THE CASK ; then, if you tap it anywhere, you get a good stream ; if you put in but little, it will dribble, dribble, dribble, and you must tap, tap, tap, and then get but little after all.” But this does not represent all—this will not give that piquancy and plainness, that instantaneous power of touch which is, in fact, the full mind, flavoured and spiced by an intense soul. We think it very likely that the influence and power of sermons have been impaired and impeded by their length. All men, whatever their attainment, or capacity, or experience, in Protestant churches, have been expected to fill out their sermons to a certain length, and that length, perhaps, quite sufficient for human patience, even if the preacher be a man of eloquence and conviction.

How, then, when he is neither one nor the other, or, at best, a Liliputian in either? It is true of sermons as Horace says of poetry. All overflowing is from a full heart, and preachers should use, and give to their hearers, whatever adds really to the apprehension of the subject in their own mind; there is an unwise conciseness, as there is a tedious diffuseness; all that brings nearer is useful; all that tends more to unveil the subject to the mind helps; there are, among our modern preachers, many whose words suffer thus, and their people suffer in them. While it is quite possible to drown the sense in a bewildering world of sounds, it is also possible to fail through want of application; few audiences will beat a nugget of gold into gold leaf for themselves; very few are disposed to be at any trouble. We heard a criticism upon a minister some time since: "It is so nice to hear our minister; you hear the same thing from month to month over again; dear man; it's always the same. Ah! you always know where to find *him*." Therefore, we say, encourage a flow, not a flood. Rarely can it be wise to imitate the cataract in force or speed, but the river you may imitate. Dr. Johnson says, "It is so much easier to acquire correctness than flow that I would say to every young preacher, 'Write as fast as you can.'" Whitefield's rule was "never to take back anything unless it were wicked." "This," says Dr. Alexander, "is very different from rapid utterance or precipitancy. Deliberate speech is, on the whole, most favourable." Pastor Harms was wont to comprehend his idea of delivery to students in three L's—"Langsam, Laut, Lieblich," poorly

rendered by “lengthened”—that is, deliberate—“loud, and lovely”; but Luther’s, which we have just quoted, is better.

M. Mullois insists, with great earnestness, on the necessity for brevity. He quotes St. François de Sales:—

“The good Saint François, in his rules to the preachers of his Order, directs that their sermons should be short.

“Believe me—and I speak from experience—the more you say, the less will the hearers retain; the less you say, the more they will profit. By dint of burdening their memory, you will overwhelm it; just as a lamp is extinguished by feeding it with too much oil, and plants are choked by immoderate irrigation.

“When a sermon is too long, the end erases the middle from the memory, and the middle the beginning.

“Is not long preaching very much like an attempt to surpass these men, who were so highly imbued with the spirit of Christianity?”

He continues:—

“But it will be objected: What can be said in ten or seven minutes? . . . Have not a few words often sufficed to revolutionise multitudes, and to produce an immense impression?

“The harangues of Napoleon only lasted a few minutes, yet they electrified whole armies. The speech at Bordeaux did not exceed a quarter of an hour, and yet it resounded throughout the world. Had it been longer, it would have been less effective. In fifteen weeks, with a sermon of seven minutes every Sunday, one might give a complete course of religious instruction, if the sermons were well digested beforehand.

“If, then, you wish to be successful, in the first place

fix the length of your sermon, and never go beyond the time! be inflexible on that score. Should you exceed it, apologize to your audience for so doing, and prove in the pulpit of truth that you can be faithful to your word.

* * * * *

“‘ But do speak more at length ; . . . you are wrong in being so brief ; . . . you only tantalize your audience ; . . . you deprive them of a real pleasure.’ Expostulations like these will pour in upon you ; but don’t listen to them : be inflexible, for those who urge them are enemies without knowing it. Be more rigid than ever in observing the rule which you have prescribed for yourself. Then your sermon will be talked of ; it will be a phenomenon ; everybody will come to *see a sermon of seven minutes’ duration.* The people will come ; the rich will follow. Faith will bring the one, and curiosity will attract the other, and thus the Divine word will have freer course and be glorified.” . . .

This is certainly, to speak in paradox, carrying brevity to its utmost extent. Preachers of the Church of Rome have usually designed brevity. We believe they have no instances, like those tremendous trials of patience in the great Puritan and Church of England preachers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who did hold their audiences for hours. It is noteworthy, although we do not speak of exceptional occasions, nor do we forget instances to the contrary, that some of the greatest and most useful preachers of our day never pass beyond half an hour, while others are scarcely even so long. Perhaps, if preachers remembered more frequently that words will not come back, “*Nescit vox missa reverti*”—“A word sent abroad can never return,”

it would check in all a too impulsive flow ; surely it might make us all tremble to think of the immortality of our words, and especially if they are uttered with any measure of vitality of conviction ; but, however uttered, who can limit their destination ? Who can tell the soil into which they may fall, and in what manner they shall bring forth fruit ? Certain it is, they can never return ; therefore should the conscience dictate the word, should rule the influence, shape the sentence, and give accent to the tone. This would be the true study of the passions, of that difficult and yet so desirable part of pulpit power, the pathetic. It is to be supposed we have, in our turn, all been compelled to laugh where the orator intended we should cry ; he had learned his lesson so badly ; he knew nothing of what he was speaking, simulating a tone ; as when an auditor spoke of a rather celebrated French preacher, and said, " In your preaching just now, you pronounced, 'Depart, ye cursed,' exactly as if you had been saying, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father.' " We do not imply from this that, beside the preparation of the heart, there is not necessary a human artist-side to preparation for the pulpit, in the first place, as the whole result will depend on the true humanity and fine texture of the human instrument itself. This is a human side, and then, beyond this, what right has any man to suppose himself exempted from the old law of labour ? " By the file, and by the whetstone," to quote again another sentiment from Horace, the work proceeds, — " By the labour and by the tediousness of the file." To all success goes patience, plodding, and perseverance, and

the great masters of speech, however free, full, and flashing their words might be, were no real exceptions to this great law ; on the contrary, they illustrated it. “*Fungar vice cotis*,”—“I will do the office of a whetstone,” and this refers to external helps and aids. The whetstone cannot cut itself, but it can sharpen the steel and enable it to cut ; and so with all studies. All the stores and accumulations of mental wealth and discipline, every study is a whetstone to sharpen the wits. Moreover, if the iron be blunt, then to the file or the whetstone must be put more strength. What can any science, language, or book, do for a teacher ? Mathematics, criticism—they are valuable, but they are only valuable as they are proved by the labour of the file, not in themselves ; they are a kind of whetstone on which to sharpen the intelligence. They are like a hone, dead and lifeless in itself, yet calling forth the edge and sharpness in the steel. All people must in their time have been amazed at the little that study and reading in many departments seem to have effected for many men.

And, if we seem to step from these considerations to some apparently not so closely, at first sight, connected with them, it is for the purpose of asking what, in the whole range of culture, can go beyond the enabling a man to speak plainly upon the matters he takes in hand ? From some cause or other, we believe, if auditors were polled, their verdict would be that, in general, preaching is obscure. M. Mullois well, and not needlessly says, “The sermon should be plain.” A spirit thoroughly in earnest, when it attempts to enter regions where

perhaps the multitude may be unable to follow, will usually convey a feeling, an impression, of an elevated and healthful character; but no sermon, even if it have passages of this character, should be wanting in strokes and general delineations and impressions which should entitle it to the character of a plain sermon, great statements, great enforcements, and great influences distinctly felt. This has been the mark of all great oratory. Demosthenes has ever been held as a mark and a model in this particular. What we know of the neglected, and almost forgotten, but splendid orations of Bolingbroke, one of the greatest of English masters, and the invectives and orations of Chatham, Brougham, and Fox, were of this type. When we look at the great masters of pulpit eloquence, Massillon, Bourdaloue, Saurin, Hall, and even Irving, it is the same; plainness, so far from being an impediment to, is an element of eloquence. Surely the question is natural enough, How can that be really eloquent which is not obvious? Neither a flow of speech, nor fertility of illustration can constitute it, but the fitness of both to impress and carry along the feelings of an audience; and the end of all homiletics should be twofold, namely, to furnish the mind with method, and to give it freedom, freshness, and clearness in the use of it.

Sometimes ministers have taken singular expedients to awaken drowsy congregations who, by the effect of their somnolent words, have been gathered to the sleep of their fathers. Sydney Smith used to say that "some preachers seemed to think that sin was to be taken out of men as Eve was taken out of Adam—

by first putting them to sleep." Emanuel Deutsch, in his paper on the Talmud, recites from that wonderful collection of ancient Hebrew tradition, the story of an old Jewish preacher who, in the course of a hot Eastern afternoon, while he was expounding some intricate subtlety of the law, beheld his hearers quietly fall away in drowsy slumbers. Suddenly he burst forth, "There was once a woman in Egypt who brought forth at one birth six hundred thousand men!" We may fancy how the audience started at this remarkable tale of this prolific Egyptian woman! Very quickly the preacher proceeded, "Her name was Jochebed; she was the mother of Moses, who was worth as much as all those six hundred thousand armed men put together who went up out of the land of Egypt." His hearers, it is said, slept no more that afternoon.

So that we suppose the virtue of long-windedness comes down to us from ancient times. "What a gift," says quaint old Thomas Fuller, with evident feelings of admiration, "what a gift had John Haslebach, professor at Vienna, in tediousness, who, having to expound the prophet Isaiah to his auditors, read twenty-one years on one chapter, and yet exhausted it not." Dr. Southey calls this Haslebach "the arch-emperor of the spin texts, but yet," he continues, "the Rabbi Chananiah may contest the palm with the Vienna professor; it is recorded of him that, when he undertook to write a commentary upon part of the prophet Ezekiel, he requested the Jews to supply him with three hundred tons of oil for the use of his lamp while he should be engaged in the work." He does the ancient rabbi the justice, however, to

believe—what we also believe to be true—that it was in this way he intended to affirm that the prophecies of Ezekiel were inscrutable beyond all, even rabbinical knowledge.

So we may give, as the second circumstance of dryness, *the obscure prolixity of the preacher*.

It is certainly the case that usually the failure to arrest attention is supposed to be mainly attributable to the preacher; and of course there are different audiences. It is not to be supposed that every preacher, however admirable and excellent, is fitted for, or can make himself intelligible to any and every congregation, although it is possible to feel the force of an argument the course of which we cannot see, and to bow before the impression of an eloquence which is little more than a strain of captivating music, but of which the words are unintelligible. Edmund Burke was one of the greatest orators in the English parliament of any age, and his speeches are still regarded as fountains of political wisdom. It has been said that he had more of the material of oratory than any other statesman; yet his immortal speeches were delivered to almost empty benches in the House of Commons. The great man fell into a habit of dissertation; he became loquacious, abstract, and prosy; he lost thus in directness, concentration, and *fire*; and thus he earned for himself the satire of Goldsmith in *Retaliation* :—

“ Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing while they thought of dining.”

But, again, he will always be a dry preacher who has not a fount of living freshness and interest in himself. Dry sticks? why, of course we all know that there are dry sticks. But perhaps we might differ as to what constitutes the dryness; in a word, we should say, where there is no upward eye, no prophetic instinct, no Divine perception, no human tenderness, no illuminating vision, there must be dryness; an interesting man and teacher makes everything interesting, and a dull, monotonous, lifeless mind makes everything lifeless by its touch. We have said a thousand times to young preachers, Do not talk about anything that is uninteresting to you. We have seen a man take a bone, a fossil bone, and, as soon as he touched it, he clothed it with flesh, and we saw the ancient creature of the pre-Adamite world rehabilitated, for there was a living interest in the mind of the comparative anatomist. We have seen a man take a dead leaf in his hands; he expounded how the whole tree was in the leaf; in his hands a mighty process of living venation was seen; in his hands the dead leaf instantly became a forest; for the interest of a man, like Hugh Macmillan, charms the dry leaf from death and makes it a tree of life to his hearer. We have seen a man take a bit of chalk, and it became a limelight, pouring a stream of splendour down the dark vaults of ancient creation; we have seen a man take a stone, or an insect, and each became alive, full of romantic interest; they illuminated the past or the present ages, and shed a light over the fields of existence; and then we have seen a man take a holy text, a real live coal from off the altar, and with his

criticisms, exegeses, and eschatologies, the corpse-like chill of his own soul extinguished the fire ; and, in his hands, it became a cinder; and instead of a flame, lo ! it crumbled into ashes in his hand.

And indeed it is only a living conscience can search the conscience, and there have been preachers who, far from being dry sticks, have been live coals. But they have, we believe, often paid heavily for their temerity ; we could fill a volume with instances in which even professedly religious men have spoken in the spirit of Mr. Biglow :—

“ I’m willin’ a man should go tollble strong
Agin wrong in the *abstract*, for that kind of wrong
Is allays unpop’lar, and never gets pitied,
Becos it’s a wrong no one ever committed ;
But he mustn’t be hard on partic’lar sins,
’Cos then he’ll be kickin’ the people’s own shins.”

And may we not be forgiven for saying that, in this as in other departments, there may be automatic action and no real life ? for a man must be a dry stick who has no real spiritual life and earnestness. Why, a man may be in the company of a real prophet a long time and not know it ; he may even see the prophet’s fervour, and inherit some share of the prophet’s fame, and yet not see the prophet ; and the prophet’s very simplicity may be a veil which obscures him to the hard worldly mind. He does not see the prophet, and so he suspects the man. He may lie down with him, eat with him, sleep in the same room with him, and yet not see the prophet. In reading the history of the prophet Elisha, do we not remember that well-known and very eminent person the Rev. Mr. Gehazi, who, we

suppose, stood somewhat in the relation of a chaplain to Elisha? Why, the Rev. Mr. Gehazi never saw the prophet; he could not, it was not in him to do so; and, on one occasion, he took the prophet's staff. Fancy! the prophet's staff in the hands of Gehazi! It became a dry stick; it would not act at all; it altered its behaviour; to call the dead to life was a hard thing, indeed an impossible thing. The spirit departed from the staff; dead remained the child; and the staff was a dead staff in the hand of a dead soul.

We die, we pass away, and, as we have often said, ministers are soon forgotten; and, as a rule, those whose work is most abiding are soonest forgotten. They have the tardiest recognition on earth, but they have an ultimate resurrection. And it is a grand condition of labour that the longer the time which elapses between the seedtime and the harvest, the more glorious is the harvest, and the more precious the fruit. The further off therefore we place our aim, the less we desire to be ourselves the witnesses of our triumph, the more illustrious will be the measure of our success; the loftiest expectation will receive the most illustrious crown. "He that soweth to the Spirit shall reap life everlasting." On the whole, we believe, the noblest, most illustriously unselfish minister we ever knew was Benjamin Parsons, of Ebley, in Gloucestershire; he was an orator, a wit, a scholar; he was one of the earliest leaders of the temperance reformation. He was the author of the fine essay called "Anti-Bacchus." He seems to us, so far as human nature could be perfect, a perfect man.

He never had from his church more than £150 a year, for a large portion of his life only about £100. But what poor things our great popular London ministers look by his side! We shall never forget sitting with him by his fireside in family worship—and his family worship was the most perfect thing of that kind we ever knew;—we were reading from Timothy; we came to that text, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” It was his constant method to draw out in the family the full force and meaning of a Greek word. A friend of ours was telling us some time since how he, crossing the Atlantic, with one of our eminent ministers, inquired of him on the deck, what he thought of our recent New Testament Revision; the eminent Bow-wow said, “I do not want a Revision; I am the Revision!” Benjamin Parsons would never have said that, but he really was that. On this particular morning, when we came to that text, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee”—“Stir up the gift that is in thee”—“Richard,” he said, addressing his eldest son, “Richard, what is that Greek word we have for *stir up*?” “*Ana zoo pyrein*, Papa.” “Milly” (to his eldest daughter), “there are *three* words; what are they, and what do they mean?” “*Ana* signifying *up*, *zoo* signifying *life*, and *pyr* signifying *fire*.” “So, then,” he said, “you see, literally they mean *Give life to the fire*; what a forcible word! we have no word in English exactly like it.” Even while he was speaking the fire in the grate was dull; it furnished too good an illustration to be allowed to pass; he pointed to it. “See,” he said, “this fire needs the poker; if we do not take the poker and stir it, it will quickly go out altogether;

there are the materials for a good fire, but I must stir the fire to make it burn brightly, and I must take care how I stir it. Mental materials are not only necessary, but activity to give them life and ventilation. We all have gifts, and fires within ourselves, but they all need stirring, or they will never burn." And so he struck the dull coal and kindled into life the lambent flame, saying, as he did so, "Don't forget that you all have the gift, the fire within you, but it will only burn as you stir it. Thus it is that we need to arouse the whole man of the mind and of the soul, and to quicken the sensibility, the intellect, and the heart." This was the way in which our friend read the Scriptures in his family every day. He was no dry stick, but a wondrously living coal.*

After all, it is for ever true that the eye can only see what it is fitted to see—"we receive but what we give" ; to the dull mind all is dull ; and thus, while it is true that a *dull* preacher makes a *dull* audience, it is equally true that a dull audience makes a dull preacher. It is not therefore very wonderful that it is often the case that there is a dignity in dulness ; and it is significant that, very frequently, a man will make his way in the world only provided he is but dull enough, wooden. Fancy that, a race of wooden parsons ; not a very remote or impossible conception ; and, in truth, we have known such ; we have heard of one so impressed with the importance of dulness as an element of ministerial usefulness, that he made it a matter of prayer : "O Lord, make me

* "The Earnest Minister : Life of the Rev. Benjamin Parsons, of Ebley." By Edwin Paxton Hood. 1856.

dull enough that I may be able to overtake the stupidity of my congregation." There are many who have no necessity to pray that prayer. And let us remember that a dull *preacher* is not necessarily either a bad or an ineffective teacher ; he may have wisdom, that is something to say, but lack mouth, that is the power to say it." Perhaps we should find our idea of dryness and dulness in a set of wordy demonstrations, unrelated to humanity or to life, in which it must be admitted many indulge ; like "The Deacon's One-horse Shay," useless, purposeless, perfect in art and plan, but uninfluential on the affections, inoperative on the life :—

"Although the deacon's (or preacher's) art
Had made it so like in every part,
That there wasn't a chance for one to start ;
For the *wheels* were just as strong as the *thills*,
And the *floor* was just as strong as the *sills*,
And the *panels* just as strong as the *floor*,
And the *whippletree* neither less nor more,
And the *back cross-bar* as strong as the *fore*,
And *spring*, and *axle*, and *hub encore*.
And yet, as a whole, it's past a doubt,
In another hour it will be worn out ;
First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill.
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it *went to pieces all at once*.
End of the wonderful one-horse shay ;
Logic is logic, that's all I say."

But it is a tedious business for a man to talk when he has nothing to say, "when he follows his own spirit and sees nothing." *Sees nothing!* for we began by saying that the eye can only see what it

is fitted to see. We remember to have had, some time since, what constitutes a pair of singular instances of the different ways in which two very religious men will contemplate works of art. In Venice we were accosted by a brother minister, a Scotchman. He went into ecstacies when he saw us. "Now," he said, "you know Venice well; I do not." Then he implored us, as his stay was short, to tell him what he ought to see. We were, however, unable to accompany him, possibly because we thought he would not be a very interesting companion; but we sent him to the Picture Gallery, and we charged him to be sure and pay particular attention to the pearl of the gallery, Titian's Assumption of the Virgin. We met him at dinner, and asked him what he thought of it; we meant, how he felt on looking at it. "Man," he said, "I never lookit at it at all; I dinna like sic things." "In the name of all art," we said, "why?" "Because," said he, "it's a heap o' lies; all such pictures are a heap o' lies altogether, with their Virgins, and Magdalens, and Madonnas, and saints, and martyrs, and Assumptions; and that Assumption picture is the greatest heap o' lies of all." "What do you mean?" we said. "Why, what I mean," he said, "is this, that I have no pleasure in looking upon such things, because *what is false in theology can never be true in art.*" And it is possible that some may feel a great respect for that brother; well, never mind who it was. We left Venice, and on our way home, at Lucerne, we met with another brother minister, who also shall be nameless, although well known. We were comparing notes of our impressions of some of the great galleries, when we referred to Murillo's celebrated

picture of the Annunciation in the Louvre of Paris, one of the most priceless gems of art in Europe ; and our friend, although rigidly Protestant enough, went off into raptures upon the marvellous picture of the sacred mother, surrounded by the wonderful clouds of cherubs' faces, a crowd of baby faces and forms all gathering in love round the ascending mother Mary. Matchless beauty broke out to his eye all over the canvas. "Why," said we, "what did you see there ? What did it say to you ?" We thought of our friend in Venice, and we said, " You know it is altogether false ! " " False ! " he said ; " *why*, that picture is the *revelation of the consecration of maternity*. What Murillo really *meant* to say I do not know, but what he *has* said is that *through Mary, the mother of our blessed Lord*, there comes a blessing upon all babes, and infant faces are glad because she was the mother of our Redeemer. By the birth of that babe and suckling the Lord ordained strength to still the enemy and the avenger. And it seemed to justify a reading of that text in 1 Timothy ii. 15, ' She shall be saved *in* child-bearing,'—that is, by, or through, *the* one great child-bearing, applying the blessing to the Saviour as the offspring of Mary's maternal hour."*

Such were two ways of looking at a picture, two very different ways in which the same thing may strike different pairs of eyes, showing how things of

* And we may say here that, in the Revised Version, this is given ; the word *the* is substituted for *in*. The woman shall be saved not *in* child-bearing !—alas that is *not always so*—but she shall be saved *by the* child-bearing. *A wonderful text*, we think.

art, which seem to one pair all rubbish or superstition are to another full of wonder and beauty.

But this leads to the remark that dryness and dulness arise, usually, from the uninteresting point of view from whence the truth is seen.

Do we speak in language too daring when we say we cannot conceive how a preacher *can* be uninteresting ? For do but consider that the whole universe in which we live is written all over with moral and spiritual analyses and significances, which the preacher, by the key and aid of revelation, is to interpret and to expound ; nature is a system of hieroglyphic language which he is to read to his people, dry and dead,

“ As a desolate tree with its branches bare,
Drinking frost from sunbeams and winter from summer air.”

To the unenlightened eye and the untrained heart, by the light of revelation every bush burns with fire.

We know that we appear to have fallen upon another and a different age, an age concerning which the language of Pope may be regarded as almost prophetic. Has not the beautiful and glorious old Greek word *esthetic* become a mockery, a by-word, and a scorn, the very satire even of the stage ?

“ As, at some dread approach and secret might,
Art after *art* goes out, and all is night ;
See skulking Truth to her own cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head ;
Philosophy, that leaned on heaven before,
Sinks to a second cause, and is no more ;
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid to Sense ;

See Mystery to Mathematics fly—
In vain they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires;
And, unawares, Morality expires."

On the other hand, is there not something luminous when the preacher holds up the lamp of revelation, to show its light along the wonderful vaults, halls, and corridors of nature? How sublime, for instance, are the researches and conclusions of chemistry; we know not how to express our reverence, our admiration, our awe, our delight; we know neither whither to turn, nor where to rest; our heart is moved when we think of the infinite invisible wonders which go on in silence round us,

" finished, yet renewed for ever;
You breathe, you inhale, you exhale, a world you do not see."

Talk of wonders, of mysteries in religion! we wish one could give to us a more clear and distinct account of nitrogen. You understand it is a prime essential to your life; you breathe it. It is a wonderful power, our good friend nitrogen, it is the most wonderful power in the world, and yet all its powers are negative.

" We hear it not, we see it not,
E'en when its terrors move us,
Yet viewless, printless, echoless,
Its steps are always round us."

It is like a mutual friend. It goes about among all parties, and makes peace with all. It is like cheerful good-humour coming into a company where all are turbid and troublesome; that

subtle, fiery-tempered oxygen, that wild, vehement, passionate hydrogen, nitrogen comes between them, and represses, and allays. If you only get rid of him,—we say it seriously, and you know it; we hope the reader will forgive the coarse strength of the phrase, but we say it,—you get rid of nitrogen, and it would be hell broken loose. If we could only have enough and not too much of *him* everywhere, we could not come to grief. We make our gun cotton by getting rid of him; and then a spark, just a little too much, and our world is torn to pieces. And yet our friend has no colour, no odour, is entirely devoid of any active properties; in his solitary company a flame could not live; he has no chemical affections; but he is the ballast of the atmosphere, gives density and weight to the atmosphere; he especially keeps that nimble and fiery oxygen in his place, gives a lymphatic body to a spirit which would otherwise utterly impair and destroy all surrounding order and life. Were it not for this inertness, what would be the consequences if those conditions were easy by which the union of oxygen and nitrogen, mixed blandly and happily together in the air, were so chemically combined as to pour down in floods of nitric acid? Again, slightly alter the equipoise of the atmosphere, and it pours down upon you in floods of nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, and the risibility of the atmosphere would be the death of the race. Nitrogen we always regard as one of the most stupendous mysteries in nature; no chemist has ever yet discerned it, and yet we are worse than nothing without it. An invisible agent proclaims its presence; we cannot touch it, cannot

see it, cannot smell it, and yet the chemist is sure of its existence ; it modifies everything, itself unapprehended ; without it all is disorder. Its balance slightly disturbed, everything falls into ruin ; oxygen then becomes a raging fire ; hydrogen becomes an explosive demon. Nitrogen, like a blessed peacemaker, keeps all in order ; it is the conservative influence of the world in which we live. We often wonder if chemistry will ever know it better ; it ought to fill our minds with awe to think that we are perpetually in the presence of such an unaccountable agent, and that before it the lamp of science is foiled, and as we hold it up we are like a man with a light in a room in which he sees phantoms he cannot touch, and hears noises the causes of which he cannot detect ; and still he holds the lamp, and is aware of the presence that disturbs him, but it will not enter into his knowledge, and he cannot account for it. But he knows !

The preacher never attains to a real platform of power until he feels that he stands in the midst of a region of metaphysical life, that not only human nature is essentially metaphysical, that it is not the least physical, but, on the contrary, entirely metaphysical, while nature herself is metaphysical too, for the metaphysical is at once the foundation, the corner-stone, and the pinnacle of all natural facts. We are obliged to go behind nature, and beyond nature, to obtain the slightest solution of any of the facts of nature ; the physical is only "the night side of nature," haunted by spectres ; it is only in the metaphysical that we see the morning spread upon the mountains, and the day break, and the shadows

flee away. We would sum up most of the teachings and inductions of the scientists of our time, our Darwins, Tyndalls, and Huxleys,—great men, for whom we have a profound respect, and to whom, in their own particular walk, we feel a great indebtedness of gratitude,—as the wanderings of a philosopher in the search of a genesis. Forest matter, they tell us, makes up the whole of the universe. They might as well tell us that a coach and horses can get on without a coachman, or an engine, car, and coals without a driver. Very truly says Mr. Froude, “In Scotland” (he might have added, in other places also) “wretched old women were supposed to run about in the country in the shape of hares. At this very hour the ablest living natural philosopher is looking gravely to the courtship of moths and butterflies to solve the problem of the origin of man, and to prove his descent from an African baboon. What the thing is we call ourselves we know not. It may be true—I, for one, care not if it be—that the descent of our mortal bodies may be traced, through an ascending series, to some glutinous organism on the rocks of the primeval ocean. It is nothing to me how the Maker of me has been pleased to construct the perishable frame which I call my body. It is *mine*; it is not *me*; the *nous*, the intellectual spirit, being an *ousia*, an essence, we believe to be an incorruptible something which has been engendered in us from another source.” Science cannot go behind the senses, but the whole stream and tendency of science leads on to the acknowledgment of the Infinite Presence and Personality, greater than all science, of whose ways science is simply an empirical

discoverer at best, higher than all physics and all nature, and to whom the circle of the whole round universe is a thing, is a something outside of Himself. Science is very useful when it manipulates the forces of nature, and seeks, out of nature, to discover the means of harnessing and binding them for the benefit of man, but when it attempts to discover the genesis either of nature or of man, it does nothing more than reveal its own insanity, it becomes the victim of superstitious follies. So, that, in the presence of the great *savants*, the lords of science in our day, we seem to stand like Paul, in Athens, in the presence of the Stoicks and Epicureans, and to be compelled to say, “‘In all things I perceive that you are too superstitious.’ Oh, gentlemen, you believe too much for me! indeed you do; I cannot keep pace with your credulity.”

Do we go too far in this? Professor Tyndall tells us that “the formation of a crystal, a plant, or an animal is, to the scientific thinker, a purely mechanical problem.” Stalks, ears of corn, crystals of salt or sugar, animal bodies, brain, and consciousness are all the results of mechanical and molecular force, affairs of ordinary mechanics, and no infinite mind behind them. “Everything that is seen is made of things which are seen—that is of things which do appear.” It is quite inconceivable. It has sometimes seemed to us that Professor Tyndall, our greatest popular English scientist, has talked a larger amount of nonsense than any man living. He endorses the extraordinary and confusing sentiment of a German philosopher,—“Without phosphor no thought nor memory!” All very fine. Salmon have

a good deal of phosphorus ; likewise also, we believe, there is a good deal in the ultimate elements of whiskey, and, perhaps, there are some persons who would say, "*Without whiskey no thought*" ; but neither fish nor fluid are understood to be remarkably thoughtful creations of nature or of art. Some of his philosophic prelections seem to be exquisitely funny. While joking with a blue-eyed friend about one of his discoveries the other day, we were telling her of Tyndall's conception of a blue eye. He says that " soap and water will give a tint of blue " ; then he relates some experiences among the Alpine lakes, where the water is blue ; then he continues, that soapy water and blue lakes are alike resultant in a turbid medium ; and, following up in this wake of suggestive thought, he announces the pleasant discovery that a blue eye is simply *a turbid medium*, just the same affair as soap and water ; soap and water ! that is Professor Tyndall's genesis of a blue eye ! A most masterly evolution of thought, certainly. But how about dark hazel eyes ? But talking about blue eyes leads him to talk of blue skies, to the whole expanse of the firmament. He says he has entertained a notion about the quantity of matter contained in the sky. " Now," he says, " let the atmospheric space be swept clean, and the sky-matter be properly gathered up ; what is its probable amount ? I have sometimes thought that a lady's portmanteau would contain it all ; possibly a gentleman's snuff-box might take it in. I entertain," he says, " an idea that a sky, quite as vast as ours, and as good in appearance, could be formed out from a quantity of matter which could be held in the hollow of the

hand." And that is all that Dr. Tyndall thinks when he "considers the heavens"; a pinch of snuff—that is Professor Tyndall's genesis of the firmament above us! * Not a word of Him who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain, and spreadeth them out like a tent to dwell in. Thus to such minds, as Thomas Carlyle has said, "the universe is no longer an oracle and a temple, but a kitchen and a cattle stall, and science a chink-lighted underground workshop of logic." Dr. Tyndall goes to church; for what purpose we shall see. We see, his theory is that man has taken a long time to make, but, in the long course of ages, the nebulous mist has at last happened into the shape of a man, a *human* soul, "a combination of molecular affinities," to speak in the abominable slang of the school; God is defined also as the "*potentiality of nebulous matter!*" So a turbid medium has happened into the phenomenon of a blue eye. It is infinitely easier for faith to conceive the supernatural than all this. But Tyndall goes to church, and what does he learn there? why,—we quote his words—"that all devotion exists in space as a purely mechanical effect of nature"; he says, "I have watched with deep interest and sympathy the countenances of some praying women in the churches of the Continent. I have seen a penitent kneeling at a distance from the shrine of the Virgin, as if afraid to come nearer. Suddenly, a glow has overspread her countenance, strengthening its radiance, till at length her very soul seemed

* We have been guilty of no exaggeration in this rendering of Professor Tyndall's "Genesis," as the reader may find for himself by reference to his Belfast addresses.

shining through her features ; sure of her acceptance, she has confidently advanced, fallen prostrate, immediately in front of the image, and remained there for a time in silent ecstacy. I have watched the ebbing of the spiritual tide, and remarked the felicitous repose which it left behind. At each new phase of emotion, the *timbre* of the woman's countenance changed, and the music breathing from her face became altered in quality." We believe we do no injustice to this passage in speaking of it as heartless and brutal, its object being simply to show that all religious feeling, all devotion is a trick of the blood, that it is, in fact, *heat considered as a mode of motion!* Warmth in the blood ! that is, with Professor Tyndall, the "genesis" of the sorrows of the soul, and its consolation in devotion !

We have already spoken of the false finery of the pulpit ; but it would be very easy to deliver a lecture on the false finery of science also. Men of science are exceedingly fond of telling ministers that they know nothing of science nor of scientific facts ; curious, if true, for we also are able to read and to think ; we are not quite fools, and we are able to put this and that together ; in our time we have not only read a little of our Plato, but a little of our Aristotle too, have looked a little into Euclid, and made ourselves familiar with the words of the master of these gentlemen, Bacon's "Novum Organum," a manual which is our admiration and our joy. Strange that we should be able to follow the teachings of the master, but are dunces too dull to make out the meaning of the disciples ! However that may be, we seem to have attained to this, that no

doctrines about the composition and correlation of natural forces are at all able to account to us for the fact, for instance, that to us the wind, whispering among the boughs of trees, can persuade music out of anything : the string tied across a window, a hollow stone, the old bell, even when the old sexton has no hand upon the rope, or the waves of the sea as they lisp and splash on the shingle or the sand. We know that melody and music are all made up of number ; but that number should affect us so, poor combination of molecular affinities that we are, is passing strange. *How* is it ? *where* is it ? and *what* is it ? The philosopher may say what he likes, but to us it is really metaphysical.

Thus a great deal of all this so-called philosophy, Tyndall's science and Bain's metaphysics and psychology, reminds us of a curious surprise in London, the other day, when one of those mighty Hindoo rajahs came over ; he was to be presented at court ; he had brought with him, as he thought, about a quarter of a million's worth of precious stones, and he desired to wear them all ; he went with them to an eminent lapidary and jewel-setter to have them all polished and reset for his attire ; he desired to appear—may we say it without giving offence ?—as a very great swell indeed. He was told he must wait four hours ; but in less than two hours, they told him again that the jewels were all not worth so many shillings ; his imaginary wealth was not worth so many ; it had all been changed in India !

It is thus we have regarded many of those boastful and showy-looking decorations which modern science claims for its robe, so many of them as false as

they seem to be fine. Now, amidst all these gewgaw vanities of interpretation, the Christian minister carries a live coal to the altar of truth when he takes the Christian metaphysics to the interpretation of nature and of man, to declare that this which underprops the entire round of nature is metaphysical, as the entire nature of man is metaphysical. We have sometimes thought the chair of metaphysics in any university is the grandest a man can fill, to demonstrate to man his soul, to separate his thought, and to make manifest the separation of the soul behind the world from the world of beauty and terror around us ; to chase the flying spirit of life through all its material forms, until, at last, it retreats into the Infinite Mind and Will ; to see how all things indeed exist in number, weight, and measure, but to run up the mighty diapason of nature into the hands of the infinite Master-builder, who weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. “Lo, He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, *and declareth unto man what is his thought*, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord, The God of hosts is His name.”

Surely science teaches the instrumentality of all nature ; all nature is an organ ; the infinite spirit is unseen, but surely felt. Every object is a tube through which the Divine Spirit breathes ; man is the key, or keys, and God is the Divine finger touching, and waking all into harmony. Nature is dead, like an organ till the breath inspires, till the finger touches it ; nature is first a chaos, then a corpse ; as in the building of that wonderful in-

strument and arrangement of human workmanship the organ, it is at first a mass of planks and lumps of lead, until all the difficulties are overcome, all the separate interests united together, until all is complete: wooden frame, leaden tubes, ivory keys, and then, and now, *music*, speaking to please and charm. Such thoughts lead up to the question, Shall man less fulfil the purpose of his creation? Now the imagination is everything to nature; nature without it—that is without the interpreting soul—we have likened to the great organ in the cathedral, or great hall, without the player; it is a *thing*; but when the player touches it, it becomes a *power*. The organ sits alone in the great church, like a huge, weird, looming, and will-less spectre, through the long days, through the long silent nights; the storm sounds over the roof, and there are storms in the heart of the old organ, but it cannot speak them! and the long sunbeams or moonbeams stream through the tesselated windows, and there is no star so remote but that old organ could fetch forth from its dark chamber a tone to sound its heights or depths; but it dwells alone, speechless and silent! But when the man comes who can make the harmony, the Handel who strikes the keys, and bids the flutes move and the thunders roll, some sublime deaf Beethoven, rearing his perfect palace of sound in an architecture invisible to sight, himself, the very player, all isolated and lone, the music, all within himself, makes dead things respond into beauty at his touch. As the panorama of shadow sounds goes floating by, and thus hard material productions lead to the perception of their signifi-

cance to invisible things, so from unshapely iron violins, and giant harps made of iron, and huge unfeeling trees, and surging flames, we seem to reach out to the thought that, like the musician, we are surrounded by a universe which will break out into melody, and only waits the master finger or the master voice to enable it to do so. Then, when the master voice is heard, he finds himself in the presence, as in the mighty Hindoo poem, of the God who kindles, the God of celestial fire—He who troubles the air, and fires the clouds, and touches the thoughts of man with flame; whose mantle is the changeful sky, the crimson, the gold, and the amethyst; whose wrath is in the east wind, when the trees are wrenched and crushed back again to earth, when the sand is torn up in eddies, and the white salt dust of the sea is flung in the face of heaven; whose laughter is the sunlight, and His grief is the clouds when they give forth their rain—and he worships with reverence the Mighty, the Exalted, the Undecaying and Ever-young.

CHAPTER XIII.

JAMES STRATTEN.

IT is affecting to notice how often the mightiest and most effective preachers pass away, and in a short time leave scarce a memory behind them. We have remarked this in several instances ; it impresses us at present in the instance before us. James Stratten was never what is ordinarily called a popular preacher, not popular in the sense in which James Parsons or Henry Melvill was popular ; yet during the many years of his ministry at Paddington Chapel, that place, then one of the largest in London, was always crowded, and crowded by one of the most select congregations of any Nonconformist community around. It is interesting to know that the first pulpit ministrations which met the ears of Robert Browning and his wonderful wife, Elizabeth Barrett, were from those accomplished lips ; but it is difficult to detect in Mrs. Browning's poems the least of the teaching beneath which she had been trained.

Mr. Stratten did not very frequently leave his own pulpit ; clearly his tastes and ideas were not such as easily to mingle in every variety of place, or hurry of service. He was formed rather to instruct than to attract, to charm and awe by a weighty manner

by passages of that exquisitely refining description which it takes some taste in a hearer to appreciate and to follow. He had few of the faculties of the man of action, and preferred rather to work thoughts and emotions into maturity, than to present their surface, or their crude outlines to the people ; yet there was an irresistible power in the preaching of the man. We judge from a simple test : we were about seven years of age when we heard him first, in the chapel of our then constant visitation, the Old Tabernacle in Greenwich ; and the text and the sermon continued impressively engraven on our mind and memory. Yet we saw and heard no more of it until its publication nearly forty years afterwards, in the "Intermediate State, and other Discourses." The incisive manner of Mr. Stratten may be gathered from the fact that we were able at that distance of time to detect several instances in which he had corrected the sermon as we heard it ; and, as often happens when sermons are corrected for the press, the correction did not seem to be improvement. When we have said that Mr. Stratten was not of the order of popular ministers, although for forty-two years sustaining his ministry in a congregation crowded, and so admiring, we must yet admit, even before we enter upon the characteristic qualities of his sermons, that his manner had with it a way and mood of uncommon power. He was tall, with a face so dark, expressing the most melancholy temperament ; an expression on the face, when uttering darker shades of thought, not less than terrible, yet strangely lighting up by a singular and ineffable sweetness, that always, as does such light in the

storm time, forbids one to think of the black cloud and the roaring tempest. "I have," said one of his hearers in those days to us once, "seen in the pulpit, on the face of Mr. Stratton, as much of the seraph as I ever expect to see this side of eternity. I must also say," he continued, "I have seen upon his face as much of the being who is the opposite of the seraph, as I ever care to know at all." It was a grand impressiveness ; sermons never read, save once in our experience ; no hurry of speech, no rapid interflowing rhetorical arrangement of words ; slow, very quiet, very impressive. The style of the preacher was quite his own ; and we shall have occasion to point out how much was gained by a broken angularity, by a frequent abrupt commencement of a paragraph. No style was more calculated to fasten the hearer ; but it supposed a more than ordinary measure of interest in the hearer's mind. The hearer was never assailed by the glowing attempts, the imposing strokes, which, usually, in the great preacher beat down all disposition to be indifferent. A serious manner does not always win attention. Some preachers look as serious as the wax figures at Madame Tussaud's, or in a hair-dresser's shop, but it is ineffectual ; one thinks of what Charles James Fox said of Lord Sidmouth, "It is impossible for anybody ever to have been half so serious as he looked." This mock solemnity is ridiculous ; but there is a manner of the countenance which instantly commands, it is an index to the habit of the life ; and this gloom of manner seemed almost perpetually to brood over the face of this preacher. If we are to designate the style of

Mr. Stratten's average discourses, we should speak of them as *expository*—not critical, not *exegetical*, but *expository*, in standing by the text read, fixing its sense, and drawing from it its various lessons. This, in his case, was something more than the textual method; he seldom wrought at a topic of thought so as to work out an essay upon it, but he wrought the text, and turned round its words quietly, holding them up successively like prisms, to catch the rays of spiritual light. In a singular, ingenious, and entertaining little book, but of no reputation, "Passages from the Autobiography of a Man of Kent," occurs a vivid description of an accomplished Nonconformist minister, whom we are able to identify with Mr. Stratten, from the sermon the "Man of Kent" was so fortunate as to hear; it appears to have been his first entrance into a Dissenting meeting house, and not slight was his astonishment.

"I have the most vivid and distinct recollection of the whole scene, as it was entirely new to me, and differed so materially from the Church-of-England services with which I had been familiar from my childhood. The text was from Isa. vi. 1-4; and it was a sermon on the memorable Vision of the Prophet in the Temple. I can recollect even now, at a distance of more than thirty years, the opening sentences of that discourse; and the marked attention of the great congregation made a deep and lasting impression upon me. After reading the text very deliberately, the preacher looked up from the Bible, and, with rather low and chastened voice, said: 'In the year that King Uzziah died, which, according to chronology, was the year in which Romulus, the founder of the Roman Empire, was born. In the year that King Uzziah died:

for kings must die. All flesh is grass, and the goodness thereof is as the flower of grass. The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, all the beauty, and the wealth of the world, await alike the inevitable hour :

““The path of glory leads but to the grave.”

‘Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of? But God lives ; He is the everlasting King ; His throne endureth to all generations ; His dominion does not pass away ; and He revealed Himself in unwonted splendour and majesty to the mind of His prophet in the year that King Uzziah died.’ The preacher then directed attention to two points from the passage selected. I. The glory of God, as manifested in Christ Jesus to the prophet’s mind ; and II. The manner in which the seraphim witnessed the deed. The sermon was a full hour in its delivery, and was one of great beauty and power. The preacher had no notes before him, and I was astonished at his ready eloquence, as sentence after sentence came from his lips in the most natural and unaffected manner ; the language was chaste and elegant, his elocution the best I had ever heard, even on the stage, and his gesture such as would have done honour to John Kemble in his best days. I went away from that chapel with a very different opinion of Dissenters and their services to that which I had entertained all my life. I had always associated Dissent and Dissenters with ignorance and vulgarity, and imagined—as many other Churchmen do in the present day—that their religion was made up mainly of cant and hypocrisy. Here, however, was a scholar and a gentleman—a man endowed with the great natural talents and acquirements that make up an orator ; and exhibiting moreover, as I was informed, in his daily life the virtues that should ever characterize and distinguish the minister of Christ.

We have said the "Man of Kent" was fortunate even in hearing Mr. Stratten. We would have given much to have heard that one sermon. It happens to be one with which we are very familiar, and it stands alone and apart, and a model of that peculiar order of pulpit eloquence for which the preacher was distinguished. If the astonished auditor had ever heard John Kemble in *Hamlet*, we do not wonder that Mr. Stratten suggested a reverent comparison ; the dignified, yet broken and almost fitful moodiness of the soliloquy must have well fitted that extraordinary discourse ; sustained, self-possessed, it is eminently one of those sermons in which, from first to last, the preacher seemed to have all his "singing robes," as Milton would say, "about him as he soared." We would gladly, were it possible, give to our readers this sermon as an illustration of a peculiarly striking and yet most simple method of dealing with a text. We have spoken of Mr. Stratten's style as expository ; but this is even rather a paraphrase, and it is a sustained and useful poem upon Isaiah's vision. Take one closing paragraph ; it is very illustrative of Mr. Stratten's general style.

"*And one cried unto another!*" One cried, and but one ; they spake but one at a time. The text defines what we call a solo. '*One cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts !*' There is something delightful in one voice, in one lark rising in the heaven, or, when the shades of evening come down, one bird—a nightingale—warbling in the woods. One human voice has been known to replicate miraculously, and to fill the ears of a vast and death-silent audience, the audience

being enchanted by it, held in the most exquisite captivation. What shall it be to hear a seraph sing! I exaggerate nothing. I come not up to the real import of the text; for it is said that when he cried, 'the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried.' And they were no common posts; they were Jachin and Boaz, that had their names on account of their stature, and strength, and glory, but they trembled at the seraph's voice. I have been told that, on a great musical occasion in Westminster Abbey, in the reign of George III., there was one stroke, a swell so deep and so amazing that the building shook, and they were afraid of its repetition. But let me tell you that high anthems are sung in heaven. When they laid that stone, that poor, paltry stone, at the building of the Second Temple, there was shouting which filled all heaven again; but when Christ's great work is done, when all the myriads of the saints shall be gathered home, and all the unsinning creatures in His universe shall be gathered together to be the witnesses, they will raise such a chorus, they will hold such an anthem, as shall make the arches and the canopies of the universe to quiver again, and in sympathetic joy. And I do believe that in the heavenly world there will be the solitary solo, and the social worship—worship by twos, and by threes, and by fours, and the great united adoration of the immense multitudes of myriads who shall come together on high festive occasions."

The reader, if he never heard Mr. Stratten, will bear in mind that such passages as these—indeed all his sermons—were delivered in a slow, soliloquizing manner; not a finger was moved, scarce a movement of the body, except the occasional turn of the head; yet the whole manner was living, and the entire audience beneath the dominion of those dark, ex-

pressive eyes. Some orators hold their audiences in leash by the speed and vehemence with which they drive their words along ; they seem to hold their sentences four-in-hand, and the words appear to leap from their lips four abreast. We suppose this is the oratory which tells over vast multitudes. But let the reader attempt to read the passage we have just recited after that fashion, and all its power is gone ; each sentence demands that it shall be received like a guest into the mind. The highest order of poetry will not bear this impetuosity of delivery. Fancy Milton read so !—Adam's Morning Hymn, or Satan's Address to the Sun ! Kemble did not act so. Fancy the famous soliloquies in *Hamlet* uttered in that fashion ! Brooks and little rivulets are delightful, precious natural things. How they seem to hurry along ! The vast river moves as rapidly, but it scarcely seems to move at all ; it rolls and marches on in stateliness and strength. The speedful manner is almost sure to repeat and amplify, and to win its way by dilating ; the slower and more sustained manner determines that there shall not be too much of anything, and the expressions and images are nicely chosen, and so adjusted to the great matter in hand that they shall give effect, and full effect, to the whole ; some little insignificant image, it may be, brings out into stronger vividness the entire impression.

The solitary figure by the side of the lake, or the bird on the wing over the dark sea, suggests to us a frequent beautiful characteristic in Mr. Stratten's sermons—his keen sensibility to natural sights and sounds, his happy introduction of some distinctly

defined impression of a scene of natural beauty or terror ; and this conveyed in no hurried manner, carefully, slowly presented, so defined that the hearer rejoiced in and felt the very freshness of the scene. We remember what seems to us a very beautiful instance of this in a sermon called "The Gladness of Morning and of the Evening," from the text, "*Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*" The whole sermon is one of singularly soft and quiet beauty. Towards the close we have this passage.

"How does the evening sing?—that is a question. Here, again, we say that Nature rejoices in the evening, and that it has in it elements and principles which make a good and pure mind rejoice, when the shades of evening fall upon the earth ; when God draws His curtain round about us ; when He prepares to give us refreshing sleep ; when the birds go to their nest, and the cattle lie down ; when man ceases his labour and expects his rest, then there is that which is harmonious, that which makes melody in all this. When the stars are revealed ; when the constellations open themselves up to our gaze ; when the great canopy and concave on high is seen,—

" 'In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is Divine.'

Even by the sea shore, when the billows roar, when the foam and spray are driven by the mighty winds in the dark, evening has its melody. Evening in a garden, when you go up and down among fruit trees, and can see the distant hay and corn stacks being gathered in—God's bounty collected by man—evening has then lovely music, there is sweet singing going on around us. In

the evening we take a retrospect of the day ; we remember what we have said and done, and betake ourselves to Him Who can forgive and purify the leper. Those who had contracted legal defilements were, of old, cleansed in the evening ; so oftentimes are we. We take care that the sun does not go down on our wrath ; we deliver ourselves from all sufferings, and extinguish all anger when we say to God, ‘ Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ; ’ we commune with God as Isaac did when he went out to meditate ; as Enoch and Noah were accustomed to commune with Him. Evening is a time for devotion, for walking with God ; and so we are made holy, and delightfully and melodiously fitted for our home. ‘ I will lay me down and sleep in peace, for Thou, Lord, wilt make me to dwell in safety.’ ”

It is scarcely possible to read, it must have been still more impossible to have heard, without feeling the mind drawn into the very spirit of evening peace. These rural images very often caught and detained this preacher very sweetly, they form quite a characteristic in the structure of his sermons. Thus with the text, “ *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound,* ” another glowing and glorious discourse. After the enumeration of sounds not joyful in the world, falls in the sweet symphony of the following passage.

JOYFUL SOUNDS.

“ There are sounds simple, sweet, rural ; sounds which soothe and tranquillize the mind—the sheep-bell, tinkling as the sheep move upon the pasture ; the huntsman’s horn ; the birds as they sing ; the lark as she rises ; the nightingale as she utters her note. The sweet singing

of birds has been called the poor man's music ; he pays nothing, yet is there no music more soft, more sweet, or which, in the best frames of the mind, enters more deeply into it. There is the sound of the village bell ; there is the reverberation of the echo in caverns by the sea shore ; there is the noise of the billow ; there is that tranquil state of the sea, when there are no billows, when it is simply a wave softly fading away. All these are sounds belonging to God's creation, adapted, intended, designed, I conceive, to minister to the happiness of man. There are sacred sounds, as when Aaron stood in the holiest of all to minister. There were the golden bells round the margin of his sacerdotal vest, and as he moved, offering supplication and discharging his duty, the tinkling of those bells was heard, and those without knew he was alive, and that he was accepted in his service. And there is the pealing organ, when it is employed for sacred purposes. There is the sound of many voices, when they are combined and concentrated in one act of worship, and wafted away upon the breeze. There is the sweet canticle which you may sing when you are alone in your chambers, in your libraries, in your retired places, in your garden, in the field, in the wood, if you can go out to one."

All this shows very careful preparation—we mean the preparation of genius ; every word, and the disposition of all the parts of the picture, keep the mind living in the impression the preacher determined to produce. As we do not think these passages are likely to be very well known, we will present our readers with one more, finely realizing the preacher's intense love of nature and perception of its higher lessons.

AUTUMN REFLECTIONS IN A FOREST.

“One day, late in autumn, walking in a wild wood, I suddenly stood still. Around me was a vast forest, with its mighty and stupendous trees, covered with their varied and decaying foliage, ready to fall by the first breath of the tempest, and mingle with the dead leaves already on the ground. And it seemed to be the ruin of the world, as if Nature, in her most beautiful forms, were coming to a close. But I stopped in the silence, and found there were living beings amid the solitude and dreariness. At intervals, in the distance, a cock crew; a sparrow chirped; there was the hoarse voice of distant rooks; a horse neighed; presently there was the lowing of an ox, the barking of a dog, the bleating of a sheep, and the small bird rustled amid the brushwood and the leaves, while the cooing of a pigeon was heard from afar. And I was alone, as amid the falling columns and prostrate architecture of some ancient and perished city. So, I thought, if life decays and is extinct in some forms, it shall survive in others, and those the more precious and the more important; there may be life in the midst of death, if we have but the eye to see it, and the ear to hear the melody; and if the world perishes like the seared leaves of the forest, there will be another to rise from its ruins in imperishable beauty, and with incorruptible adornments: a righteous population shall inhabit that world. And as the shades of evening descended, and darkness spread itself over the scene, my spirit was comforted.”

How is it preachers do not more indulge themselves and refresh their hearers by such pictures? They are always acceptable, most of all acceptable, if rightly and adroitly used, by those who live in

cities, and are, therefore, usually far removed from the possibility of conversing much with such scenes. Man in his heart loves the country: he may find his occupations chaining him to city pursuits; and even, like Johnson or Lamb, he may not be disposed to be long far away from his round of ordinary occupations and associations, which have made certain scenes dear to him; but, in his heart, man loves a natural sight and sound. Why does the poor old woman, pent up in the city, buy and try to tend her little flower-pot, or hang up in the poorly-furnished room some bird-cage, with its tiny twittering songster? There is a loving attempt made to get near to that world which seems to have in it more of purity, fairness, and freshness. Wonder it is, that so thickly strewn as the Scriptures are with every variety of natural reference and imagery, especially so pointed as the directions of our Lord are to find in natural things—flowers, birds, cornfields, and orchards—the texts illustrating the spiritual significance of life, these things should be so neglected by us; strange, too, when we find the delight which certain poems awaken, and the immense popularity they attain, because they bring into the city the life of woods and fields; strange, we say, that the preacher does not learn, that if he is to affect and move men, he also must be a poet, and painter too. But we have alighted on an accident almost of Mr. Stratten's method and teaching, an accident, however, which gives us a very fine and clear insight into the instinctive character of his mind and the furniture with which his sermons abounded.

We have said that Mr. Stratthen's style was expository and paraphrastic ; it was his pleasure to take a text full of material, and to touch word after word till every one became a "link of sweetness long drawn out." It was his way, while not departing from the harmony and unity of a text, to follow the suggestions each word inspired. It may be said that in his sermons he always kept along the highway ; delightful as were many of the suggestions, and terse and harmonious the expressions, the whole plan was very simple. We will take one of his most simple,—

THE CURE OF NAAMAN.

"Introduction.—In the Scriptures there are heights of Divine light ; on those heights I hope ever to be able to expatiate. In the Scriptures there are depths of Divine darkness ; I hope often to dive into them, and, according to my opportunities and abilities, I will go down into those deep and transparent waters. In the Scriptures are lengths and breadths of knowledge and information. You may sometimes think that the topics discoursed of are abstract, abstruse, and difficult ; and if it were so I would screen myself under the example of the Apostle Paul, of whom the Apostle Peter testifies, that he did write some things which were hard to be understood. Would you in your theology never proceed beyond the A B C ? But all that I have to offer you in the narrative before us will be simple to every capacity ; not a child present but may clearly comprehend what I purpose to advance. In the story of Naaman there are four parties concerned.

"I. Give your attention first of all to the **SERVANTS**.

"I. *First*, the Syrians had gone out by companies, and brought away captive out of Israel *a little maid*, and she

waited on Naaman's wife. These persons were freebooters, banditti, common in those countries, etc. They had carried off the little Israelitish maid. Had they killed the father and mother? If these had escaped alive, what agony when they thought of the condition of their daughter, their little maid! There is no comparison between a child dead and a child lost. Exposed to infamy, insult, vice, idolatry. Those who are absent from us, and of whose condition we have no knowledge, having received no intelligence, may be in a far better state than we believe. This little maid was secure and happy in the palace of Naaman. She sang sweetly there in the ineffable simplicity of nature; conformed herself to the necessities of her lot, acquired in what the event proved to be the will and providence of God; and respecting her I wish to observe—

“(1) *She had been religiously educated.* She had heard of the prophet and the perfections of the prophet's God. She knew that the religion of her country originated in the midst of miracles, signs, and wonders; knew that there was light and power and efficiency in Hebrew principles, and no good to be got in the dead and dumb idolatries of Rimmon. Parents, there is a word to you, teach your children the Scriptures, etc.

“(2) *I observe respecting her the prudence of her demeanour.* There was something remarkable about her, or she would not have filled this situation. She was lady's maid to the highest military officer of the realm. Had she filled the house with the noise and clamour of her religion, she would not have been respected or regarded; her light shone silently, and without a voice, and was its own recommendation. Her demeanour softened prejudice, and secured her respect in the palace; and be assured there is ineffable enchantment and sprightliness in activity, and willing duty, where these qualities open and beam in the young. She might have been the

grace and ornament of a nobler rank, but she was where God had put her, and she was there a pattern.

“(3) I notice *the tender interest she felt in her master's welfare*. So she said, ‘Would God, my Lord,’ etc. Have you never met with people,—I have with many,—who did not care if the world were in conflagration, if their own nest was not in a blaze? Let us learn to seek each other's good. Be assured that dignity and honour depend, not upon the place, but upon the person; not where you are, but what you are, as this Israelitish maid demonstrates.

“2. We have *another set of servants, those who accompanied Naaman*. Servants and horses and chariots, perhaps camels and asses—what we call a caravan. There must have been many servants, considering the quantity of material they brought, to preserve order. There is no censure pronounced upon them, so I infer that they were, although idolaters, persons of fair character and respectable habits.

“3. *But there is the servant of the prophet—Gehazi*, a man of activity, cunning, wit, and impiety, with an oath ready to swear to a lie. Listen to what he says. What invention! genius! what a ready story! He is furnished with what he wants in a moment: the devil helps liars. Follow him as he went in to his master. Did he not know there was no place where the workers of iniquity could hide themselves? ‘Whence comest thou, Gehazi?’ ‘Thy servant went no whither.’ Elisha drew out all his sacred nature, and showed to him all the castles he had been building in the air; and he went out, from his master's presence, a leper white as snow. He had better have had an empty purse and clear conscience, a plain coat and a whole skin, than a full purse, fine clothes, and leprosy along with them.

“Here are the three classes of servants, the very good, the middling, and the intolerably bad and base. I have done with the servants. I come—

“II. To the soldier, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian forces; and I wish to mark,—

“1. *His rank*, a great man, said by some to have been the person who aimed at Ahab, because by him the Lord had given deliverance to Syria. Even when idolatrous armies are delivered, the victory is ascribed to God. A mighty man, of commanding aspect, great abilities, etc. I wish to mark—

“2. *His malady*. ‘But he was a leper,’ a crook in every lot, a *but* in every person’s condition. BUT, etc., etc.

“3. *His mistake*. To cure his malady, he went to the King. See the King of Israel and the King of Syria both in the dark, and Naaman in the dark.

“4. *Notice the pride and vanity of Naaman*, coming with his horses and chariot before Elisha; and because his vanity is not honoured he goes away in a rage. Passion is blind: like a vicious horse, it will smash all things to pieces. If passion hold the reins you will come to no good. There was no reason in his rage.

“5. I wish you to notice *his prudence*, in listening to what his servant said. ‘If the prophet bade thee do,’ etc. So rage was overcome. Rage is bad, but fixed malevolence is worse. Listen to remonstrance.

“6. *Mark his obedience*. He did not go back to Damascus, but went right on to Jordan; and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child. And if you ever had a little son or daughter two years old, you have kissed and loved, you can enter into the exquisite beauty of this similitude. And here you have the Gospel, the Gospel in its perfection and simplicity.

“7. *Notice his gratitude*. He did not go off as fast as he could, but he came back again to the prophet’s door. ‘Were there not ten cleansed?’ etc.

“8. *I must notice his infirmity*. What did he mean by asking permission to bow in the house of Rimmon? That was the idolatrous temple of Damascus. Rimmon probably

Baal, etc. It gives me the opportunity to say, if any man says, I shall go to a ball, but I shall not dance ; I shall go to the theatre, but I shall not join in its profligacies ; I shall go to the card party, but I shall not play at cards. Will you go ? Perhaps you had better not ; perhaps you had better have nothing to do with the air, or the roof, or the House of Rimmon ; perhaps you had better listen to the advice of the Apostle Paul, be ye not conformed to this world ; perhaps you had better remember that the fashions of the world pass away.

“ III. You have the PROPHET.

“ 1. *His regard for the Divine honour.* There is a God who can kill and make alive.

“ 2. *His dignity.* When Naaman was proud, he would not let Naaman come near him ; he taught him that he had a benefit to receive, not an honour to confer.

“ 3. *His disinterestedness.* He would receive no present. He taught the Syrian that the miraculous cure transcended all price ; was above everything money could purchase. Gehazi did his best to tarnish this great principle.

“ 4. *His antipathy to sin* ; his abhorrence of it. Nothing is more dignified here than the prophet, except, finally and—

“ IV. THE PROPHET’s GOD. Many persons in reading the narrative would overlook God—they would not see God in it at all ; and yet the story is full of God.

“ 1. *His sovereignty.* As Christ teaches, ‘ Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha,’ etc. He was one illustrious instance of cure.

“ 2. *Here is Divine Providence.* God watched over the little maid, as He did over Joseph ; superintended the wheel within the wheel.

“ 3. *Here is God’s disapprobation of sin, and love of holiness.* He sets His seal on the verdict of the prophet. Remove God from these transactions, and the life is gone from the body. It is all full of God, and—

*"The end is:—*Servants should learn integrity, love of truth, and honesty; masters should learn charity, courtesy, kindness, and consolation; God's ministers should learn disinterestedness, avoid whatever is covetous, and stand clear from the love of money; and every one of us should learn to put our trust in that kind Providence which sheltered and honoured the little Hebrew maid, etc."

It is not too much to say that this is, in its way, a perfect model of a practical sermon, and exhibits an admirable adroitness in turning naturally, and without any artifice, every little incident in the story to practical purpose and account.

There is a kind of preaching which can only sustain itself in the shade. The mind which, with industry and avidity, enters into the life of cities and of nations, and the turbulent clash and jostle of opinions, loses its power. This is far from the case with all. Some minds have their natural aptitude and commission for work where the strife is keenest; but if the nature unfitted for such a region and sphere of labour step aside, it loses in both. Mr. Stratten was one of the isolated men. There are those who affect to regard with contempt the entire absorption of the mind in pulpit labour and the preparation of two or three sermons a week. But the force of the contempt must depend very much upon the quality of the character against which it is expressed. Two or three sermons a week ought to represent a wonderful amount of intensity and power. It is a contempt expressed, we believe, against no profession but that of the pulpit. The great musician is not quarrelled with because he does nothing more than sing or compose. Even his irritabilities are

forgiven him ; for it is known that his nature must be upon the strain. And so of other professions. Of all men, perhaps, most is exacted from the minister. It is demanded that, from week to week, he, like a Sims Reeves, shall do his best to charm an audience by his manner, and present to his people sentences and thoughts and pictures as richly cut as the words or the verses of Tennyson, and be equal to all and every kind of business going on beside. A kind of woe attends the man sufficiently courageous to resist the demand, and who, simply isolating himself and dealing only with thoughts and things, thus attempts, by the best he can win from God and himself, to do his best for his congregation. Such a man is not contemptible, although it is very much the modern fashion to regard him with contempt. And if there be any power in consecration to art ; if the passion of the musician be to sing, and to hold himself free from and careless of other interests and claims ; and if the passion of the painter, or sculptor, be to represent ideal forms on canvas, or in stone ; surely, the true-born preacher may plead a like passion, and—with an indifference equal to that which musician, painter, or sculptor would feel for adverse or hostile criticism—simply be happy in the consciousness of the passion moving within him, and the art which it tends to excite and create !

But, of course, we speak of real preachers. It would be absurd to apply the canons which rule the judgment with reference to an Andrea Del Sarto, or to a Rembrandt, to an ignorant stenciller or sign-dauber ; equally absurd to apply the judgment of what is fittest to a Beethoven, or Schubert, to a

merely mechanical professor of music. So in our judgment of preachers ; there are those who had better, as ministers, do almost any work than preach —visit, keep organizations together, attempt to speak such words as are given them to say to those they casually meet ; but, having no song, no utterance, no insight, no way of meeting either conscience or consciousness by aspects of truth, they simply weary and wear out the attention of men when they become preachers. The worst of it is, thoughtless Churches insist on applying the same rule of judgment to both cases, as if Shakespeare or Milton should be tried by the same standard as the penny journalist. The mischief again is, that usually popular self-sufficiency in any department commands all. It can travel, it can obtain its pictures, its books, its busts, its costly houses and furniture ; for most men would love a concert or an opera more than the song of a nightingale in the shade ; it takes a *heart* to appreciate the one. The verdict we heard pronounced once by one of these people was, that he had heard the nightingale sing, and it was no such great thing after all. To such, the racket and the tempest of opera and concert are much more apprehensible. It must be so through many things ; it must be so especially with reference to the pulpit. Happy, therefore, is the man whose tastes and powers call him to seclusion, and who has somehow the means of so gratifying his tastes as to give effect to his powers. This was very much the case with Mr. Stratten. Away from the pulpit, nothing was heard of him. He had powers fitting him to be, in a peculiar sense, a master there, and he contented him-

self with being a master there. He charged mind and heart in preparation ; and the multitudes of his own eminently select audience hung delightedly on his lips.

As to the frame of thought Mr. Stratten filled out, it had little of the build, his words had little of the tincture, of the theology of the nineteenth century. It must be admitted his theology was entirely seventeenth-century theology—a grand theology, massive, certain, and mighty—a dogmatic theology. The last thing which can be said, in general, of the theology of our day is, that it is dogmatic. Whether this be well or ill, we are not arguing. The theology of the seventeenth century was vertebrated, distinctly articulated, no doubt often bony, unclothed ; but, whatever else it was, it was symmetrical. Into what shape our theology may fall, it may be for the philosophical mind to inquire, and for other generations to know. During the period of Mr. Stratten's ministrations, men of the pulpit clung to the ancient terminology and nomenclature ; the old words had not fitted into a new lexicon. He stood by the old forms ; we have seen that he clothed them with great beauty and interpreted them with all the freshness of a genuine and thoughtful nature ; still, he was eminently dogmatic. Perhaps there can be no great pulpit power unless the preacher be dogmatic ; perhaps, by a more free and loose scheme of thought, men may be more amused, but not awed. More, perhaps a preacher has few claims to be heard who is not dogmatic. From the teacher of any science, astronomy or chemistry, we demand what he knows, more than

what he suspects. Unteaching has done good service in its day ; but never unless it has had beneath it a strong stratum of real teaching. Little is gained even by the mere removal of the false, unless at the same time there is the revelation of the true.

So, in a very good and eminent sense, Mr. Stratten's sermons seem to us to have been edifices, and he was an instructor. This was very much the style, we remember, that has been called doctrinal preaching ; and usually it may be safely admitted that such preaching is more instructive, tends more to the raising a symmetrical system of Christian knowledge in the mind, than the homiletical or hortative style of discourse. How strangely such things sound to modern ears—the gathering up a system of instruction and thought from a minister ! Of course, the merely hortative style must leave the mind unfurnished and unformed. A youth attending a course of college lectures would gain but little benefit from the professor who constantly urged the importance of such attendance, and recapitulated the advantages to be derived from a life of study, while giving no attention to the solid material, building up in the mind an acquaintance with the principles of the science. Yet this, it is to be feared, is no unfair picture of much pulpit ministration ; perhaps it must infallibly be so where the minister's mind is not itself aware of the importance of some entire system of theological thought ; or, in a word, where he has no sustained scheme of theology as the basis of his ministration. Now, by these remarks we sufficiently indicate Mr. Stratten's style of ministration and the

principles of his power and success—solemn as even-tide, as the shades of woods, as the solitary note startling the stillness of the evening, the pensiveness of a mind possessed by the sense of its perceptions and relations ; an unexcited mind, firm in its self-control, nervously aware of the immeasurable majesty of the topics it dared to handle—to whom, therefore, there was no “ port for levity ;” a mind, too, it must be admitted, not accustomed at any time to the more cheerful views of common things—the mind itself sombre by the umbrageousness through which it passed ; an eye of steadfast, penetrating power, but in its darkness shedding no bright relieving light over the natural glooms which were the perpetual habit of the thought ; a mind which, knowing the tendency of audiences to a restless impatience beneath the power of protracted discussion, occasionally strict, enchanted and enchain'd attention, not by any touch of humour, not by any cheerful sunlight of expression,—that was impossible,—but by some startling, solemn stroke of sententious expression leading on the way to another widening stream of thought—such was the preaching of James Stratten in those times when we were aware of his ministry.

We should like to present our readers with an instance of Mr. Stratten's more prolonged and sustained manner. This was often, not merely very impressive, but in the arrangement pressed home the fulness and instructiveness of the text. We have a large variety of such passages upon our memory, from which we might select ; but, very obviously, the size of this volume, and the space we desire to give to other names, forbid further

quotations ; only we will remark that this preacher reminds us how many of the best sermons are unknown to the world, and travel no further than the congregation to which they were immediately addressed. It has seemed to us that Mr. Stratten's were frequently types of what we understand by a sermon, both in character and design, in execution and delivery ; for it should be remembered, but is too frequently forgotten, that a sermon is, or should be, a thing *sui generis* ; it is a piece of workmanship, differing from any other kind of literary work. Our remarks in many parts of this volume convey our clear impression that there is no sinfulness against the earnestness of the pulpit in regarding preparation for it as harmonious with the highest exercises of taste and art.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE IMAGINATION.

WHAT is this power we call the imagination ? There are those who affect to despise it, and they laugh at the man who wields it, and sneer at him as a word-painter. Yet this is the power of the poet, the truthful rendering of scenery and character which, from Homer to Shakespeare, and from Shakespeare to Wordsworth and Tennyson, brings the object described vividly before the eye, and affects the sense so naturally as to realize and to affect the moral nature. Imagination—we think it is Ruskin who says—seizes the innermost ; it realizes vividly, and hence it affects distinctly. What is imagination but the faculty which makes images ? It is, by universal consent, regarded, as we suppose, the greatest faculty in man. Therefore it is

“ The sun of Homer shines upon us still.”

It is synthetic, it sees things in their wholeness ; it stands in the light. Logic, as has been truly said, at its best, only catches us as we are falling ; with its definitions, logic discovers no new truths ; it only gives to us the cue of those already discovered ; and even the logician, as he advances along, often adroitly calls in the aid of imagination

to shed some illustrative gleam on his toilsome way. It is, therefore, that analogy, which is only another name for imagination, becomes logic. Imagination is the healthful and full-orbed view of things. Metaphysics have been well defined by De Quincey as "a man standing before a looking-glass and attempting to look down his own throat." Far be it from us to deny the legitimate claims and the grand achievements of logic and metaphysics ; but all the ages and the literatures of the whole world have set their seal upon the imagination as the most divine, the most Godlike faculty of man. There is no fame like the fame of poets ; and the very term, in its old Greek usage, originally expressed the idea of the maker—the Creator.

The imagination lets in the light ; it is a window through whose panes the visions stream ; sometimes as little pictures, and how impressive they are ! The essays of John Foster and Coleridge, for instance, abound with them, as when the last speaks of the terrible lessons learned—alas ! too late—from history, or from our own experience ; truths learned too late, as, " alas ! like lights in the stern of a vessel, they illumined only the path that had been passed over." Or when he speaks of " Neglected truths, truths of all others the most awful and mysterious, and, at the same time, of universal interest, but considered as so true as to lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors." An image is sometimes very illustrative ; but what is its use unless it illustrates ? We remember to have heard Samuel Wilberforce, the late Bishop of

Winchester, thus illustrate the text, " How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world ? " Jesus said, " If a man love Me, he will keep My words, etc., etc., and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." " Just," he said, " as a dark lantern is of no use to any one but him who carries it; dark everywhere, behind and on either side, but, held by its possessor, it casts before him a stream of informing light." Then upon another text the same eloquent preacher says, " Many characters seem to float before our eyes in Scripture as having been visited by convictions and opportunities of grace, but only like ships which, when night is spread over the sea, emerge for a moment from the darkness as they cross the path of the moonbeams and then are lost again in utter gloom." But these things are not to be stuck into sermons meretriciously, like wax or paper flowers.

There is a singular disposition in the human mind to regard all things as human, and even inanimate things as really alive. Even from before the days of *Æsop* until now, beasts, birds, and creeping things have been made to speak, not only as in the possession of consciousness, but of reason, character, and sensibility. Imagination plays with those things and creatures; and the happy power of the good-humoured caricaturist, who would cure the vices or foibles of mankind without the severity of the satirist, is never more admirably displayed than when indulging these innocent licences of fancy and speech. It is most quaint and ludicrous to notice what human likenesses and resemblances peep out from the meanest things. The echo of a human heart seems

to sound from everything above man, and every little creature, and everything man has made, from beneath now seems to look up and claim a relationship. A parable is a spoken picture or an expression of spiritual truth through the medium of natural circumstances, and, with fable, assigns moral qualities to unreasoning, and even to inanimate things ; and the savage who called the chip of wood "a talking chip" when the missionary wrote in pencil upon it and sent it by a messenger to his wife, and so obtained back the book he needed, only illustrates the wide personification so natural to simple minds, and of which poets and teachers have always been ready to avail themselves. In England, where we have not only fireplaces, but fires and coals, and pokers to stir the fire, we usually see by the fireplace two pokers,—one short, a little begrimed stubby fellow, who does all the work of breaking the coal, or stirring up the fire ; the other, face bright, polished, aristocratic, standing there idle, more for ornament than use. Douglas Jerrold noticed this, and in "Punch's Letters to his Son," he says, "My dear boy, be a *bright* poker." It is a short proverb, and a very expressive parable ; the poor little black poker cracked the coals, and cleared the lower bar, and stirred and levelled the fire, and accommodated the tea-kettle to the coals, and, in fact, did all the poking, raking, burning, banging, and all the sweating work. The bright poker was a kind of consecrated, and, therefore, conceited thing, and, when the owner of the house went out, it was even sometimes removed from the grate, and swathed in flannel, oiled, and left to repose in luxurious idleness ; while its poor little friend was

worked to the stump, and then flung aside for vile old iron—black and bent ; the bright poker, effulgent and speckless, lasted out a dozen hard-working little pokers, lustrous, inactive, and proud of doing nothing. Therefore, said Punch to his son, “Be a *bright* poker, my boy.” And this little image may remind us how this extraordinary power of fancy, employed on moral analogy, and finding a moral and spiritual significance in things, invests dead and almost worthless things with even spiritual properties, sets them all a-talking, and gives them, from out of ourselves, functions so far beyond themselves, as to make them embodied teachers, and representatives of truths. Thus, by a charming parable, that wise man, Mr. Caxton, teaches how good wishes do not mend bad actions ; but how good actions may mend bad actions. Again, when his little son came into the room glowing and panting, health on his cheek, vigour in his limbs, all childhood at his heart, exclaiming, “‘Oh, mamma, I have got the kite up so high ! come and see. Do come, papa,’—‘Certainly,’ said my father ; ‘only don’t cry so loud. *Kites* make no noise *in rising*, yet you see how they soar above the world. Come, Kate, where is my hat ? Ah, thank you, my boy.’ ‘Kitty,’ said my father, looking at the kite, which, attached by its string to the peg I had stuck into the ground, rested calmly in the sky, ‘never fear, but what *our* kite shall fly as high ; only the human soul has stronger instincts to mount upward than a few sheets of paper on a framework of lathe. But, observe, that to prevent its being lost in the freedom of space, we must attach it tightly to earth ; and

observe, again, my dear, that the higher it soars, the more string we must give it.' " Thus a wise man, as in this example from "The Caxtons," makes worthless things preach great sermons. Great is the use in a discourse of a happy image, clear and sharply defined to the eye. As Fuller has said, images and similitudes are the windows of thought ; for their power to open the avenues for light to stream into the understanding, we have often been reminded of the beautiful, happy verses of Bishop, a truthful and thoughtful English poet, almost forgotten now ;—

"When, through a chink, a darkened room
Admits the solar beam,
Down the long light that breaks the gloom
Millions of atoms stream.

In sparkling agitation bright
Alternate dyes they bear,
Too small for any sense but sight,
Or any sight but there.

Nature reveals not all her store
To human search or skill,
But when she deigns to show us more,
She shows us beauty still."

Images and similitudes are the pictures of the soul, and memory hangs them up in her long gallery, and frequently reads in them the history of some abstract thought, some recondite argument ; by the light they afford the structure of a syllogism may be easily forgotten, the pathway of a discourse may be easily lost to the memory ; but a felicitous and graphic picture will abide. Elder and younger will alike bear it away, and refer to it again and again. An apposite figure in a Sunday-school lesson

may chance to be repeated by the children for generations to come. Logic may be an admirable lantern, but a parable, a similitude, is the light within the lantern, without which its usefulness must be very questionable. Prize, therefore, the gift of parables. A preacher should determine, anyhow, to be interesting ; he must not be guilty of mere talk or interminable loquaciousness. Great preachers are interesting preachers, as great writers are interesting writers. That great moralist, Mrs. Poyser, used to say, "Some folks' tongues are like the clocks, as run on striking, not to tell you the time of the day, but because there's summat wrong i' their insides." "Give us lessons, not laces," said Thomas Adams. "A garment," he continues, "to have here and there a fringe, or button, or jewel, is comely ; to be nothing but buttons is ridiculous. We will make the borders of gold, with studs of silver. Divinity is that border of gold, human learning the studs of silver."

Some preachers have made their sermon one long sustained allegory ; it would shock the fastidious taste, but perhaps only in reading, not if the reader of the reported sermon had been one of the hearers. William Dawson, Billy Dawson, as he was, and is familiarly called throughout the north of England, has not so long left us, but that there are many who recall his genial and kindly nature, and his graphic delineations and overwhelming power over every audience he addressed. He was a Methodist, one of a race to whom the excitement of a religious service is understood to be normal and indigenous. Thus, when he preached from the text,

“Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies,” his imagination took fire at the metaphor, and there was presented to him, and he presented to his hearers, a crown, a royal coronet, studded with precious stones innumerable, of every colour, but with a central stone of surpassing magnitude, brilliancy, and value; consentaneously this became the crown of lovingkindness and tender mercies, the countless brilliants represented the blessings of Providence and Grace, and the centre stone the priceless jewel of Salvation. To express this as he wished was more difficult than to conceive it, and several feeble sentences were uttered before the crown was shown to the people. But when, at length, it was exhibited in all its radiant glory, with its centre gem of purest lustre, and the deep crimson and ruby lights caught up, reflected, and inflowing with diamond splendours from a thousand lights by the precious stones which clustered round it, and when he exclaimed, “He has crowned us!—Saints of God, let us crown Him!” you should have heard how they shouted for joy, realizing the fine verse,—

“Daughters of Zion, come, behold
A crown of glory and of gold;
Which the glad Church, with joy unknown,
Placed o'er the head of Solomon!”

One of the hearers present said afterwards, “The saints shouted aloud for joy!”

When we were young, we heard Billy Dawson preach; his subject was the end of the building of the Ark, and the story of the flood. He gave out his text, “The Lord shut him in.” But he had no

sooner announced the text than he said, "This will not do." He opened the pulpit door again, and went down the somewhat long circular pulpit stairs, and, from what is called the class-leaders' pew, he imagined himself to be Noah ; the pulpit was the ark which he was building ; it was the Church, built out of the wreck of a doomed world. While he was preaching, he was also building the ark ; he was felling the trees, he was sawing the planks and the timbers ; he was adjusting the building, he was expostulating with unbelievers and scoffers ; and still, amidst all the preaching and building, he was to his hearers, almost unconsciously, ascending, step by step, the pulpit stairs ; he was going up into the ark. At last all was finished, all were in, and he was there. Then the pulpit door was closed with a tremendous slam,—"And the Lord shut him in!" Then came the flood, the winds rose, the rains fell, the thunders rolled, and the lightnings glared over the billows ; rocks and trees were hurled and torn down, and overwhelmed the lost as they went floating by on the waves. The pulpit was the ark ; the ark was the Church, riding in safety over the billows of time, over a lost and wicked world. Oh ! we are afraid in that congregation all were, in the spirit of the famous sermon of Jonathan Edwards, rejoicing over the judgment of the ungodly ; "Hallelujah!" said the preacher ; "Hallelujah!" echoed a voice in the gallery ; and then another, and then another, and then another! When we have reached a certain height of emotion there is no help for it ; ordinary words and ejaculations are insufficient ; we must sing ! Somebody shouted, "Now is come Salvation!"

The people were ready, the whole congregation swayed to and fro on the voice of praise which arrested the preacher in the midst of his description.

“Salvation, oh, the joyful sound,” was unitedly chanted forth by the whole of that mighty mass. We are reciting a memory, but we suppose most of our readers will regard this as an abuse of the imagination. Such a scene is inconceivable to those accustomed to the decent order of Church service ; but in the freer places of Methodist worship, and from a preacher unique in character, and not bound by conventional usages, this forcible and homely oratory wielded an amazing power.

But imagination does greater things than this ; as we have said, it seizes the innermost. We have also said, the question should be asked, whether fable, allegory, analogy, or illustration be used, does that help ? The use of the imagination, in the speaker, should embody ; in the hearer, it should unbosom. We may recall the words and the emotions of Byron in the tempest, and how he transferred all the uproar and terror of the tempest and the storm to his own nature. Shall we cite a verse or two ? But notice, we do not cite for the poem, but for what the poet deduces from the scene.

“And this is night : most glorious night !
Thou wert not sent for slumber ! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee !
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth !
And now again 'tis black,—and now the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.”

Then, as we have said, he felt that the vehement energy of the storm translated and expounded to him his own nature ; was the adequate—scarcely, but still, representatively, adequate—illustration of the slumbering passions in his soul ; so that, as he looked upon the storm, he was able to say, *There ! there it is ; that is what I have known ; that is what I have felt !*

“ Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings ! ye !
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a *soul*,
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful ; the far roll
Of your departing voices is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless, if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests ! is the goal ?
Are ye like those within the human breast ?
Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some high nest ?”

And now this is the verse :—

“ Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,—could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,—
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe into *one* word—
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak ;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.”

So the storm was only the equation of one portion of the great poet’s nature, and we are afraid he never saw the satisfying, the adequate equation. But thus every noble image enables the hearer to exclaim, *There ! there it is ! that is my embodied feeling ! Now I see it, now I understand it so far as I can be made to understand ; that expresses it !*

and thus it is that the imagination seizes the innermost. This is the real imagination ; hence it is such an art, such an influence, and such power. How sublime when this is brought to bear on the embodying the great truths, the noble characteristics of the Christian life ; when meanings stand revealed, by the mingled lights of Divine teaching and human experience, in the elevated and thoughtful soul ; floating feelings transformed into convictions and definite and determinate perceptions, powers in the character and the life, as well as tremendous attestations of the speaker's genius. Many readers will think Frederick Robertson did not express the whole truth of the Christian life and faith in the following passages ; but, in all his own subtlety of eloquence and insight, he expresses that faculty of the imagination to which we have alluded :—

“Or, again, we must all have felt, when certain effects in nature, combinations of form and colour, have been presented to us, our own idea speaking in intelligent and yet celestial language ; when, for instance, the long bars of purple, ‘edged with intolerable radiance,’ seemed to float in a sea of pale pure green, when the whole sky seemed to reel with thunder, when the night-wind moaned. It is wonderful how the most commonplace men and women, beings who, as you would have thought, had no conception that rose beyond a commercial speculation, or a fashionable entertainment, are elevated by such scenes ; how the slumbering grandeur of their nature wakes and acknowledges kindred with the sky and storm. ‘I cannot speak,’ they would say, ‘the feelings which are in me ; I have had emotions, aspirations, thoughts ; I cannot put them into words. Look there ! listen now to the storm ! That is what I meant,

only I never could say it out till now.' Thus do art and nature speak for us, and thus do we adopt them as our own. This is the way in which His righteousness becomes righteousness for us. This is the way in which the heart presents to God the sacrifice of Christ; gazing on that perfect Life, we, as it were, say, 'There, that is my religion—that is my righteousness—what I want to be, which I am not—that is my offering, my life as I would wish to give it, freely and not checked, entire and perfect.' So the old prophets, their hearts big with unutterable thoughts, searched 'what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory which should follow ;' and so with us, until it passes into prayer: 'My Saviour, fill up the blurred and blotted sketch which my clumsy hand has drawn of a Divine life with the fulness of Thy perfect picture. I feel the beauty which I cannot realize :—robe me in Thine unutterable purity :—

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

This, we repeat, is the preacher's work with the imagination ; hence it is that it is such an art, and that it exerts such an influence, and such a power. Yes, and hence it is that floating feelings are transformed into convictions, fancies become realizations, and surmises revelations ; and, let us say, that is the reason why people sing,—

"Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly,"

or—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!"

They have looked to Jesus, and said, There! there! that is what I want to be, but what I am not!

there is my idea embodied ; there is my religion ; there is the perfect picture, the perfect beauty, the infinite holiness ; robe me in it, and wrap it round me, and let the divine pleroma and fulness of Thy Person be my peace.*

Referring to the power of the parable in teaching, Mr. Lynch very beautifully says of the parables of our Lord,—

“He spoke of lilies, vines, and corn,
The sparrow, and the raven,
And words so natural, yet so wise,
Were on man’s heart engraven ;
And yeast, and bread, and flax, and cloth,
And eggs, and fish, and candles ;
See, how the whole familiar world
He most divinely handles.”

In a word, the divinest teacher was the most familiar, so that “the common people heard Him gladly,” and said, “Never man spake like this man ;” so that all common things became types. Analogies are as windows through which light streams into the perceptions and the understanding. Henry Ward Beecher, that mightiest master of illustration in the pulpit, has in a beautiful passage not unknown to our readers recapitulated these illustrations. Go over the house, the lowest stone says in the silence of the night, “Other foundation can no man lay ;” and the door says, “I am the door ;” and the candle, by the bedside or in the room, says, “Christ

* The Sermons of Christmas Evans abound with these sustained allegories, which are, in truth, histories of the human soul. We do not quote them here, but hope we may, without impertinence, refer to “Christmas Evans, the Preacher of Wild Wales,” by Paxton Hood. Hodder & Stoughton.

is the Light of the world ;" and, as you gaze on the little one, simple, earnest, real, and inquiring, a voice says, " Except *ye* become as little children ;" or on the table the loaf says, " Broken for you ;" and the water says, " I am the water of Life ;" and the very roof of your house tells of the time when God's House shall receive its top stone. The ground is full of sympathy ; the flowers say, " Consider us ;" and the trees, the birds, and even the sparrows tell the story of Providence. And the hen, as she gathers her chickens, and the sheep that bleat on their pastures, and the serpent, and the hungry wolf, and the raven, and the plough, and the sickle, and the barn—Christ made them all teachers and preachers.

Thus the words of Christ and the parables of Christ became the folk-lore of the people, and they may be spoken of at present as the folk-lore of the New Testament, and to read them is to read the folk-lore of those times, as the people's book in the people's language, to which there is no approach among all the books and preachings and teaching in the world. Christ adopted this expedient to reach the ears and the hearts of the people, and, although there are other parables, all have acknowledged that the parables of Christ claim pre-eminence over all others for variety, simplicity, appositeness, and beauty ; and it is felt that no other mode of instruction could so well engage the attention, or interest the feelings, or impress the conscience, as the method adopted by our Lord ; and while they all fell so easily, and while we all read that the people " wondered at the gracious

words which proceeded out of His mouth," we feel that they all glow with a splendour as from an unseen sun. They are all the simplest things linked with another, a wonderful, subduing, and yet elevating light. It is as when, after travelling through the night, in the light of the early morning, we draw near to a great city, and see cupola, towers, and spire shining in the light of the morning sun. They are all common things, and are to be seen every day, but, perhaps, not from that point of view, and not in that light. As, then, all common things shine out, even like a city glowing and flashing in the light of a coming sun, so all these common things glow with the glory and splendour of a far-off world, and, beneath the beauty of the parable, the things of an unseen world come to view, and they are all bathed in a comfortable supernatural light.

There can be no doubt that, for the purpose of teaching, one illustration is worth a thousand abstractions; they are the windows of speech, through them truths shine, and ordinary minds fail to perceive truth clearly unless it be presented to them through this medium. One of the most loved methods of illustration ever has been the parable, but this is a high, rare, and, shall we say, a difficult power. Children love tales, fairy tales, parables. The better sort of grown-up children, we fancy, like them too; for, indeed, they are constantly doing that for us which we are trying to do for ourselves in one way or other, namely, to realize. This is the hidden charm of the story-teller: he gives "a local habitation and a name" to

"Thoughts which wander through Eternity."

From thoughts and worlds not realized he brings the abstract and wandering spirit home, and "imprisons the dainty Ariel." No man will be a favourite talker to children who does not speak in parables, and the teacher to mighty multitudes will be efficient in proportion to his power of wielding admirably the parable. The parable may be, is, and has been much abused, but no power is so likely to awaken in an auditor the listening ear, and to furnish the understanding heart. This is that power which John Bunyan glorified with his pen, and which made Christmas Evans the most popular preacher in his country ; Goethe delighted to use it. In no other way can the subtleties and sophisms of the intellect be so completely elucidated. Thus, the phantasmagoria of the mind are thrown upon the painter's canvas, and thus is fulfilled the great injunction of the ancient, "Paint your ideas." Put them into such a shape that you can look at them, and permit others to look at them. The parable is, to the abstractions of the mind, what the experiment is to chemistry, what the diagram is to mathematics or natural philosophy. Well-told parables are the diagrams of metaphysics and psychology, and if you will, of theology too. If the only Master who could teach infinite truth did not disdain them, why should His disciples ? Well said Lord Bacon, "Parables are more ancient than arguments," and the author of the proverb shows his faith in it by his frequent practice of the ancient principle. John Wesley required of all his young preachers that they should study, among other books, "The Faërie Queene ;" and it is well known that Jonathan

Edwards became a better preacher after reading "Clarissa Harlowe;" and certainly we believe, a course of judicious fiction would be as beneficial in training for the pulpit as a course of reading in mental or moral science.

CHAPTER XV.

HENRY MELVILL.

“That this style is often extravagantly admired is quite true—nay, even the downright florid is not without its admirers ; but it is not the less ineffective for that. This very admiration, as it is too often the subtle motion which has beguiled the speaker into such a vicious mode of treating his subject, so it at once affords a solution of the seeming paradox ; for it shows that the minds of the auditors are fixed rather upon the man than the subject ; less upon the truths inculcated than upon the genius which has embellished them.”—HENRY ROGERS, “Sacred Eloquence.”

IT is as natural and as necessary for London to have some great attraction for the Sabbath—some lion for the pulpit—as to have attractions of a more worldly nature for the week ; and there usually is some one place to which the people stream, at the gates of which you behold scores of carriages and cabs, the haunt of fashion—the place of glittering Bibles, gilded hymn and Prayer-books, of soft cushions, crimson hangings, and tassels. There are many requisites which must meet to produce a success so decided as this. The preacher should be a Conservative, a minister of the Church of England, or Scotland, eloquent, floridly so, a commanding and attractive figure, a full and sonorous voice ; he should be anti-Romanist, strongly attached to the order of things as by law established, have a slight spice of

eccentricity of opinion, or manner, a respectable (all the better if an aristocratic) standing in society. Most of these qualifications have combined in those preachers who have been the magnets of the metropolis—they met, for the most part, in Edward Irving, in Dr. Cumming, and Baptist Noel; they met eminently in Henry Melvill. And we must say it, while we are writing, we do not much like these fashionable audiences or fashionable preachers. Mr. Thackeray never knew any case so bad as that of which he has given a false picture in "The Newcomes," in the portrait of the Rev. Mr. Honeyman, and his church and congregation; *that is* a libel, a mere caricature, reflecting little credit on the writer, and only proving how much a man may know the world, and how profound, therefore, his ignorance may be of religious circles. Still, fashionable congregations have a taint of Pharisaism in them. To such a congregation you must go if you would see the Pharisee in full bloom; it is precisely there that the Tangles and the Trimwells worship; there the Pharisee can make broad his phylacteries, which he has no opportunity to do in a humble church or conventicle. We are thinking of preachers, but it would be as interesting a work to sketch auditors and temples; for instance, the Natural History of a Pharisee. Like other social creatures, he is a being who has only changed his vesture. Sects perish; the heart of the sect does not die, it animates new frames. These Pharisees, how much we have heard of them! we have learned to speak of them with contempt, with horror. Did they not resist the teachings of our Lord? Did they not attempt to kill Him repeatedly? Eventually did

they not do so? did they not seek to calumniate and blacken His memory? did they not persecute the apostles, and intercept their teachings? Yes; yet, after all, is not the Pharisee a type man, an antique symbol of a modern character? Change the name and the dress, and the portrait may do as well for modern England and the temples of London as for Jerusalem and its Temple. When we approach the blaze of a fashionable church or chapel, we always seem to hear a voice saying, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees!"

For, in a word, the Pharisee is one whose aim is rather to Seem than to Be. Being is Christian, Seeming is Pharisaic. Being is a body, Pharisaism is a cloak. Being inquires, What am *I*? Pharisaism inquires, How do I look? Being solicits consciousness of goodness; Seeming solicits a reputation for it. Being, however apparently weak, is at all times strong; Seeming, however apparently strong, it at all times weak. Seeming is always poor, a bankrupt desirous of being thought rich; Being is always rich, though esteeming himself poor. Seeming built a palace to keep up appearances; Being built a cottage to seek for comfort and happiness. Seeming rolls to church in a carriage, with liveried footmen, and purple velvet Prayer-book, because it is the established order of things; Being walks to church with the penitential soul to worship in humility the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. How rich must be the delight to seem, and to have the reputation for being what we are not! Could not the tailors make a cloak or coat called the Pharisee instead of the Paletot of the good

broadcloth called Seeming, edged with beautiful evangelical muslin or cambric?

But with remarks quite too severe we are standing here in the lobby looking at the carriages driving up to the door, when it is our business to forget the audience and their carriages, their silks, ermine, and sables, their gold, purple, and crimson, and step within to receive the Word for ourselves.

These remarks are wholly and altogether to be separated from the preacher.

Our boyish memories hover round Camden Chapel. Many a time did our own good minister take us tolerably smartly to task for our dereliction from attendance in due propriety upon our own proper service. In truth, Chrysostom Melvill—Melvill of the Golden Mouth—had wonderful power over us in those days ; and there are few parts of Camden Chapel where the print of our feet has not been. Sometimes, perched aloft in the gallery by the organ; sometimes, standing in the aisle; sometimes, near the great preacher himself, we touched his robes as he swept by us into the pulpit, and what an honour did we feel that to be ! From him we heard the first decided pealings of the awful organ tones of eloquence ; and in the matter of pulpit oratory, we know not that we have heard anything transcending them. Our opinion may have altered (at that time we scarcely had what was worth calling such) as to what constitutes the best pulpit style, but there is no doubt in our minds now, that the most chivalric notes of eloquent thought fell from the lips of Henry Melvill. In those days Parsons captivated our feelings—Melvill inspired our intellect. All that we can almost conceive of

eloquence, short of the absolute height and inspiration, is included in those memories. A voice, not low, but naturally loud and clear, and capable of every varying expression. How deep the pathos and tenderness, tears attested. Now it was like the sobbing of winds among the boughs, like the wail of mourning birds sorrowing for the mate—now the trembling intonations surged and heaved along!—now grief and pity swelled, and sank alternately in those rich notes!—and now, like the swell of a trumpet, the spirit mounted from the domains of grief. Loudly rang the clarion; now martial, now defiant, the words rushed forth, ready armed, gifted, and graced with all the gorgeousness of a quickened imagination. We have never since so truly heard the pomp of words. Sometimes this pomp hovered upon the borders of inflation, but, usually, their march was like a glittering host, in steel and shining accoutrements, reflecting back the magnificence of the sunshine. Sabbath after Sabbath evening immense was the audience, and over their ears the words most literally rolled, subduing, melting, appalling. There was, indeed, no appeal to the feelings themselves. The imagery did not hang like foliage upon a stemless tree; it decorated richly though not gracefully, and far too gorgeously, the porches of thought. In many of our first feeble ascents up the hill of intellectual difficulty we were indebted to this training hand. Henry Melvill first taught us to sing—EXCELSIOR.

Drawing the distinction, which we own to be somewhat difficult to draw, between Sermons and Orations—a distinction which yet appears purely

arbitrary—the compositions of Melvill merit the term *Orations*.* They are not teachings, in the better sense of the word. They abound with ideas, but the ideas are so amplified, and illustrated by imaginative diction, that they derive their lustre frequently more from their setting, than from themselves. We have lately wished, in reading, and even in hearing, too, that the thought presented itself in a plainer drapery; it is rhetorical, the key-note is pitched high, and the torrent flows on, without a breath or a pause. Yes, it must be admitted, and we see it now, that there was in it too much of the delivery of a composition. How delightful, how glorious, so to speak, is it to see volition in the pulpit; to believe that the mind *is* working there, that it, too, is a study, that the preacher is indeed at home, that he is not the slave of a mechanical formulary of thought, that he can step aside from his previous cogitations, and seize a passing conception or emotion! And is the man who cannot do this, who does not habitually do this, fitted for a preacher? Or, are we to understand that nothing should be said in the pulpit that has not been previously written, and arranged, mentally in the pacings of the study, and verbally on paper?

Perhaps Mr. Melvill's system was opposed to this; he invariably read. His sermons differed in the degree of elaboration most obviously, and some

* It has been usual to call the discourses of John Gough *orations*. This is ludicrous; they have not one characteristic of the oration,—that is, an unbroken flow of eloquence. The discourses of M'All, Chalmers, Irving, were *orations*; Gough's, "amusements."

indicate but little thought or preparation, while some lead to the inference that the preacher was unable to resist those impulses to speak impromptu, which all true orators know, and which, when felt in all their full intensity, are, to him, like the very emotions of high prophetic passion and power, and are to the people an occasion for deep and rapturous enjoyment. Yet this orator seems to know but little of the *play* spirit of Schiller. "We are never great," said that great soul, "but when we play;"—that is, all that is truly great is done easily, simply, naturally; and, perhaps, it may be said that he who does not his work, any work, in this mood, thinking or speaking, or any other kind of labour, has not yet found the work he should do. Certainly, he has not found the way in which he should do it. It is very hard, it is very difficult to disrobe the idols of our first intellectual affections, and it seems to us that it should ever be done reverently and most lovingly. But thus, then, we think we have found the defection of the Chrysostom of our boyhood—the *play* spirit is wanting—the ease, the grace of the soul. What is the proper attitude for the pulpit? What should be the standard of pulpit dignity? Are invective and declamation dignified at all? How long can we tolerate them? Pathos and description, that they, too, may be successful,—do we not demand that they should do their work for the most part with a stroke, a single flash? This hanging breathless on the lips of oratory and eloquence, startling as it may seem, is it not a very useless and almost unemotional thing? Very frequently the true idea is wonder, wonder that the machine should go on at that rate,

wonder that the man there should possess the power of pelting us with such a heap of words ; and that, when the pelting is over, we should feel no soreness, that perhaps not one of them all should hit us. This is very much the character of the rhetorician ; this is ever the fault of tropes, gorgeous diction, and rounded periods ; they are upon the whole so impressionless, so useless, the man of taste does not need them, the illiterate man does not understand them ; while the Christian, be he minister or hearer, must surely regret the time expended in polishing the mere gewgaws of discourse, in tricking out the real excellence with tinsel. Such artists frequently resemble those who would place a silken cord for the conducting of the electric current, or hang robes over the *Venus de Medici* to develop the grace of the proportions.

Far be it from us to assert that this is the case with Henry Melvill, but it is the case with all his imitators, and we, assuredly, sometimes traced something of it in himself. Possessing, perhaps, no wit, nor much destructiveness, although largely gifted with combativeness, his sentences do not often assume the antithetical form ; but no one ever attended his ministry without noticing his large propensity to the paradoxical ; and latent paradox lay beneath many of his discourses : this often imparted a tone of high interest—or, rather say, wonder—to the preacher's outpourings ; indeed the paradox, or the antithesis, is the usual resort of the more artificial style of oratory ; and those, who are fond of noticing how startlingly often race represents itself, will not be surprised at the analogy frequently drawn between Dr. Chalmers, from Scotland, and Melvill, from

Cornwall. Both represent the Celtic blood, and in both we trace the Celtic style of oratory, tinged, of course, as it could not fail to be, with the warmer and more simple gloss of Saxon feeling. Melvill's was a style that struck us as peculiarly and eminently French, it was so perpetually interjectional, so anxious to produce effect, so determined to take you by surprise, so showy, and, may we not say, often so meretricious, so dazzling by the glare of words, in every way so ambitious, at the same time so circumambulatory. All these points remind you of the disciple of Bossuet; and, like that famous man, he too, in an inferior degree, may be styled philosopher, orator, and poet; we will not say that he possessed either the regal grandeur, the splendid variegation of discourse, or the delicacy of tender sentiment and enunciation, possessed by the eminent French bishop; but he did yet possess something of all these. Like Bossuet he was fitted for the pomp of great occasions; he performed his part well before illustrious personages. We could conceive that, with a French audience, he too could have pronounced, as, over the remains of the beloved princess, the French preacher pronounced, "*O nuit désastreuse! Est Madame se meurt? Madame est morte!*" while a whole court should dissolve in tears around him. We have heard some of these fine touches in our English Bossuet—for, to our thought, no preacher of our time so deserves that designation as Melvill. Especially do we remember one very impressive sermon preached before the Duke of Wellington, in the chapel near the ruins of the Tower of London, on the occasion of the fire.

Standing where all the havoc and fury of the flames and the smouldering ashes could be seen ; in a building so consecrated by recollections the most hoary and ancestral ; the invulnerable fortress of stone, the preacher read forth his text :—“ Seeing, then, that all *these* things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be ? ” It was felt that there was a terrible and most appealing propriety between the scenery, the circumstances, and the words. And those for the sermon on the destruction of the Royal Exchange were equally appropriate, though we did not hear that discourse :—“ Alas ! alas ! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls ! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning.” The genius of the preacher is frequently as visible in the selection of a text as in the whole structure of a discourse.

From all that has been said it will be believed that the style of Mr. Melvill was truly forensic : the logical formulary was preserved, although it was not often seen ; the drapery was too thick for that : but in the perusal of the discourse we find how completely the preacher himself is bound to the dialectic form. This we say is not seen, for the mode is merely forensic ; while the argument lasts we feel that it is special pleading ; nor indeed do we think that many persons would flock to hear Mr. Melvill from his power, or precision in analyzing causes, or

disposing of arguments ; his reasoning has ever struck us as wanting in manliness and honesty. We cannot always disprove his logic, but we seldom feel it. We understand the meaning of that celebrated French criticism on Bossuet, that "he proved religion, but Fenelon makes us love it." We do not know that we were ever the better for Mr. Melvill's ratiocinations, and we fancied that he never appeared very desirous to linger upon the progress of argumentations himself—no ! but when he breaks the moorings, and launches forth on the wide fields of reverie and rhapsody, who then is untouched, who then is unimpressed ? Sometimes the whole sermon is thus a sublime effusion, in which all nature and all intelligence are bowed to the preacher's bidding : you are dazzled, blinded, by the coruscations of genius. The voice of the preacher, like a trumpet, bade a boundless theatre of wonders and of splendours open itself to you ; he pressed his finger upon the charmed lock of fancy, and troops of wonderfully suggestive words obeyed his bidding ; here he was at home ; he revelled like a necromancer, amidst a glittering galaxy of many-coloured images, all phantasmal, all producing upon you an impression like the reflections of stained glass upon the pavement of a cathedral. We feel that this is not the way Nature would paint, yet we cannot withhold our delight ; the colours are so deep-toned, so rich, so radiant ; as we said, there is so deep a pomp of hue, crimson dyes, deep royal purple : we are suffused with such radiances as these ; but what we note is, that our preacher puts as deep a purple, as gorgeous, and as glowing, and unconcealed, into a beetle's shard as

into a monarch's robe ; and tints the wing of the little bird with a sapphire as bright as that which colours the wing of an archangel.

Still, Mr. Melvill had a mind balanced by the sure instincts of an internal sense or genius. Robert Montgomery may have been described as a mere intellectual dandy ; yet the faults of our favourite's style approached, in some measure, the sins of the poetaster,—a disposition to look at things through the microscope, and to give that appearance as the natural one : but this fault, it would seem, may find its balance when objects of more magnificent moment are looked upon. Shall we seem to be like the orator we describe, attempting only ambitious things, when we say that, on some occasions,

“ ‘Twas e’en as if an angel shook his wings” ?

Seraphic gleamings darted over the temple, scorning the dull earth—the pinions seemed glistening far off, amidst distant ranks and troops of stars ; we could, for the time, imagine them doing homage to a Superior Intelligence as he passed along. Over imaginative minds Mr. Melvill's sermons had the same wild and extraordinary influence as that wielded by Martin's pictures ; the tendency, while he rushes rapidly by you, is to build any vast and awful forms of grotesque magnificence ; to stretch out the eye to far-flashing constellations and zodiacs distant in space ; to watch the mystic out-raying of strange lightnings round colossal thrones and Titan monarchies. This, it may seem, is no very desirable kind of preaching for an inflammable youth ; and Mr. Melvill himself was wonderfully

tamed in his later years in the brilliancy of his language ; but such as it was, in our young days, we describe it now ; and then, indeed, all Nature poured around him her tributary streams of imagery. The head, so strangely nodding over every peculiarly inflected sentence, the rounded period so rapidly turned by the voice, the hand never raised, but very gently lifted from the pulpit-cushion ; anon, the head thrown back, and then a very kind, bright student's eye darting proudly round the gallery, as an eagle might survey a champaign, or an angel a world ; and then, then, what a flood of splendour came streaming through our astonished senses ! On such occasions it was as if some kind spirit winged his way to point out to us the panorama of creation. It was in those days we made our Festus journey, but not on to Ruin and Death ; but he was our conductor over the continents ; sometimes, within the earth, when horrid forms glared terribly upon us from the granite and the marble ; sometimes on the ocean, fired and bronzed with the kindlings of glory and beauty ; sometimes upon the earth, till every insect and every glittering micaceous speck became a radiant letter to our eye ; and sometimes through grim mountain-passes, and fearful thunder-clouds, and clear white shafts of lightning, making blue to us the faces of the sheeted dead. It is no wonder that our imagination has played tricks with us ever since, when this was a portion of its education.

For instance,—although we scarcely know how to cite instances from so many fresh within our recollection—there was that extraordinary blaze of eloquent diction on “ God inhabiting the praises of

Israel." God dwelling as in a cathedral built of praises! It was a subject very congenial to the orator; it was throughout a glowing poem, starting from a rich description of a vast old minster, with its wonderful combinations of wood and stone, looked at as conceptions of the Divine, written thus, as the orator writes his conceptions, in words, and the poet his in verse,—the preacher walked amidst the forest of pillars, listening to the voice of God, in rich symphonies sounding there, even as of old among the trees of the garden. Well do we remember the pictured splendours of the old cathedral, opened like the rich volume of an old divine, with its long-drawn aisles, and dim recesses, its mellowed light, and deepened shadows, its bold and mighty arches; it was not possible to listen without noting how the stone, the oak, the cedar work, and the curtains, rose to the glorious proportions of the magnificent building. And then the figure of speech was used to convey the lofty idea that God dwelt in a temple built of the praises of His creatures—as in vast and hoar cathedral sanctuaries. Behold the structures!—the noble and brilliant fabrics reared from the anthems of unfallen intelligences!—dim recesses, where mention was made of the mysteries of the Divine Nature!—a rich roof, wrought out of the melodies which hymn the goodness of the Universal Parent!—a building wrought from the Rock of Ages!—its pillars, song on song—its aisles, prolonged choruses; domes, and pinnacles, and spires bearing aloft the truth that God became man, that man might rise to fellowship with God. Then rang over the entranced assembly the preacher's exclamation—"Ah

this is the cathedral!—a cathedral beheld by Christ, rising, as He hung on His cross!” And, even while the speaker rapidly poured along a sea of words of mingled piety and poetry, describing the long succession of ages contributing to the wonderful working, the spacious chapel seemed far too little for him and for us; a building rose before the eye, of infinite proportions, bathed in the soft sempiternal lustres of the Godhead—glorious with the hues of infinite love and infinite light, and swelling aloft into the unseen shrine of Deity.

We have spoken of the inflation frequently perceptible in the manner of the preacher, and in justice to our own criticism we must still speak of it. We might cite, from the volumes of sermons lying before us, innumerable illustrations, but we content ourselves with one, although that one has been before remarked upon by other reviewers. It appears in one of his most brilliant discourses—one from which we intend selecting a paragraph of a very different character; but sacred as is the theme,—the resurrection of Christ—and great as is our respect for the preacher, we can only regard it as a piece of the most truly magnificent bathos, and trumpet-toned nonsense, it has ever been our lot to read or hear. If any apology be needed for presenting it in this volume, it is, that it appears now in the edition of Mr. Melvill’s most recent sermons. Speaking of Jesus, he says:—

“He went down to the grave in the weakness of Humanity, but at the same time in the might of Deity, and designing to pour forth a torrent of lustre on the life, the

everlasting life of man.—Oh! He did not bid the firmament cleave asunder, and the constellations of eternity shine out in their majesties, and dazzle and blind an overawed creation. He rose up a moral giant from His grave clothes, and, proving death vanquished in his own stronghold, left the vacant sepulchre as a centre of light to the dwellers on the planet. He took not the suns and systems which crowd immensity, in order to form one brilliant cataract, which, rushing down in its glories, might sweep away darkness from the benighted race of the Apostate; but He came forth from the tomb masterful and victorious, and the place where He had lain became the focus of the rays of the long hidden truth; and the fragments of His grave-stone were the stars from whence flashed the immortality of man.”

To our poor mind the taste of this passage is deplorable, and the tone, if we may say so, shockingly irreverent from its meaninglessness.

But the reader will readily enough gather that this was no ordinary preaching, and that the sermons of Mr. Melville abounded frequently with phrases and discussions of extraordinary beauty, as well as loftiness; for his command over the tender feelings of his audience was quite equal to his power of descending into the more sublime and darkly shadowed movings of the spirit. How often did his auditors hold back their sobs, and stifle the tears, that the spell of their master's power might not be broken! The same sermon would frequently abound with both of these evidences of mastery over the spirit. We could scarce resist the influence to shout out loudly in the church; if he questioned us,—if he interrogated us,—we *must* do so; for his was most eminently a style of speech that not only

ruffled within you all your deeper feelings, but the manner of the preacher prevented your following them there. You followed *him* through all the moods of language or of mind ; reasoning upon the style of this mode of speech you felt how marvellous its power might have been, if it had been more bound by some obvious aim ; but the impression was like that of a very pleasant song,—you were dazzled and bewildered by the radiance of speech and imagery. You wondered at the oracle, but, on the whole, its utterances were dark sayings.

Some of our readers will say, “ Show to us some of the sentences of the orator ; ” and we, therefore, subjoin two or three extracts, and the first shall be from the sermon, to which reference has already been made, in the Tower Chapel, immediately after the fire.

“ If we come down upon any one amongst yourselves, who may be actually engrossed with worldly objects, and preach to him as it were from the shroud and coffin, we undoubtedly take the course which after all is most efficacious. It is not that we deprecate the excellence of that which he prizes,—for this might rouse his indignation, and lead him to account us ignorant of that against which we declaimed ; but we give him the whole benefit of the supposition that there is real worth in the objects of his pursuit,—at least we will not inflame all his prejudices by entering into debate with him on their being unsatisfying ; we ply him instantly with the fact that ‘ these things shall be dissolved,’ that, therefore, they are only temporal—temporal in respect to him, whatever they may be in themselves. And, though he might listen with a very languid attention, if we attempted to prove *their* dissolution by referring to some great change which is to pass over the universe, ought he not to hearken

with the most excited and interested feelings when we press him with the circumstance of *his own* dissolution? We will not argue with the sensualist in the midst of the fascinating objects wherein he delights; we will not argue with the miser whilst the gold glitters and sparkles before him; we will not argue with the philosopher as the broad arch of the heavens fixes his study; but we will argue with them amidst the graves of a churchyard, and our reasoning shall be its inhabitants of all ages and all ranks. Come with us into the sacred enclosure, and there learn feelingly the emphasis of our text. This tomb—it is that of an opulent merchant; he made his thousands—and then could carry nothing away with him of all he had accumulated. Yonder proud marble—it marks the resting-place of one who attained high rank; he wore stars and ribbons—and then left them for a winding-sheet. Beneath your feet is the dust of a voluptuary; he thought nothing worth living for but pleasure, he took his fill—and was then stripped of every power of enjoyment. This stone covers a man of science; he delighted in searching after knowledge, the planets were his companions, the mysteries of nature were his pastime; and, having stored his mind with the varied erudition—he was hurried into a world of which he had gained no intelligence. Tread lightly on *that* turf,—something like homage is due even to the dust of what once was lovely and virtuous; it is the idol of parents, over whom that grass grows, and she was all that parents' hearts could wish—a vision of the morning, radiant and formed to shed blessings on all around; the parents garnered up their souls in her, she was their all, their idol; they never seemed to think that she could die,—but the spoiler came, and, in a moment, they were childless. We need not continue our progress through the melancholy spot; but will any of you go away from the churchyard, unimpressed with the feeling that all created good can be enjoyed but for a short time, and, therefore, that it is not the good which should engage the

affections of creatures appointed for immortality? Knowing, as ye must know, that what has happened to those whose epitaphs ye have been reading, must ere long happen to yourselves, will ye turn to the pursuit of money, or of pleasure, or of science, or of honour, just as though ye had no demonstration that the world passeth away, and the fashion thereof? Will ye not rather, though ye may not have been affected as the vision was before you, of the pillars of the universe tottering, and one terrific flame wrapping up the heavens and the earth,—will ye not rather withdraw from the sanctuary of the dead, not merely confessing that ‘all these things shall be dissolved,’ but drawing from it in your very hearts the inference, ‘What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?’”

Another extract lies before us, illustrating our preacher’s power of apostrophe, selected from his famous sermon on the tercentenary of the translation of the English Bible:—

“By the memory of martyrs, by the ashes of confessors, by the dust of a thousand of saints, we conjure you to be staunch in support of your religion! The spirits of departed worthies who have witnessed a good confession, and sealed it with their blood,—bend down, we may think, from their lofty dwelling, and mark our earnestness in defending the faith for which they died! Oh, if they could hear our voice, should it not tell them that there are yet many in the land emulous of their zeal, and eager to tread in their steps; ready, if there come a season big with calamity, to gird themselves for the defence of Protestantism in its last asylum, and o behold in the strength of the living God a cause which they sustained by their arguments, and cemented by their blood! Yes, illustrious martyrs, ye died not in vain! Mighty troop! there was lit up, at your massacre, a fire in these realms

which is yet unextinguished, and from father to son has the sacred flame been transmitted ; and though in the days of our security this flame may have burnt with a dimmed lustre, yet let the watchman sound the alarm, and many a mountain-top shall be red with the beacon's blaze, and the noble vault of your resting-place grow illumined with the flash ! Repose ye in your deep slumbers, spirits of the martyred dead ! we know something of the worth of a pure Gospel, and a free Bible ! We will bind ourselves, by the name of Him Who liveth and abideth for ever, to preserve unimpaired the privileges bequeathed us, and to impart them in their beauty and fulness to the whole mass of our population ! Protestantism has long enjoyed a season of tranquillity, and its enemies may have mistaken its quietness for deadness. 'As well,' to borrow the simile of an illustrious departed statesman, on another occasion, 'might they have thought the ship finally dismantled when they had seen her laid up in ordinary, sleeping on her shadow with no signs of power. There needs nothing but the news of the invader, and presently would this mighty mass, resting to all appearance uselessly on the waters, ruffle her swelling plumage, put forth all her beauty and her bravery, awaken her dormant thunder, and walk the waves as though instinct with life.' Thus Protestantism may have seemed to be slumbering, but she has in herself the elements of might. Let only the tidings be heard that the Philistines are upon her, and again and suddenly, shall she start at the alarm and spring into energy ; and it shall be proved that she needed nothing but a season of peril to make her spread her wings and bear down upon her foes."

This is ambitious, but weak indeed in comparison with what Hall (of whom it is an imitation), or Chalmers, or Irving would have said on a like occasion.

And yet one more thrilling extract from a sermon on the closing year 1837, the evening of December 31st:—

“Which of you would be inattentive to our exhortation—which of you would go away and be indifferent to religion—if we stood now in this pulpit with a revelation from Him who hath the keys of death, commissioned to make known to every individual in this assembly the exact time he had to live; but at the same time, to show all, that their graves would be dug ere the earth should have walked another circuit round the sun? I open the dark book of fate! Every one fears to look, dreading that he shall see his own name. But we force you to see—we force you to hear—we pronounce your name, and *yours*, and *YOURS*! None of you shall outlive 1838! Ah, believe this, and we dare to say none of you shall go down to hell. Is it because we cannot compute the moment—because you can only rebel for a few days, more or less, that you venture to live as though there were no hereafter, no death, or no judgment? Indeed it is. What you would not dare do, if you knew that you *must* die in a *year*, you do without compunction because you only know that you *may* die *to-morrow*.

“But, at least, it is evident that the great thing wanted to make men provide for eternity, is what we have called the practical persuasion that they have but a short time to live. They will not apply their hearts unto wisdom until they are brought to the numbering of their days. And how are you to be brought, my brethren? The most surprising thing in the text is, that it should be in the form of a *prayer*. It is necessary that God should interfere to make men number their days. We call this surprising. What! is there not enough to make us feel our frailty without an actual supernatural impression? What! are there not lessons enough of that frailty without any new teaching from above? Go into

our churchyards—all ages speak to all ranks. Can we need more to prove to us the uncertainty of life? Go into mourning families—and where are they not to be found?—in this it is the old, in that the young, whom death has removed—and is there not eloquence in tears to persuade us that we are mortal? Can it be that in treading every day on the dust of our fathers, and meeting every day with the funerals of our brethren, we shall not yet be practically taught to number our days, unless God print the truth on our hearts through some special operation of His Holy Spirit? It is not thus in other things. In other things the frequency of the occurrence makes us expect it. The husbandman does not pray to be made to believe that the seed must be buried and die before it will germinate. This has been the course of the grain of every one else, and, where there is so much experience, what room is there for prayer? The mariner does not pray to be taught that the needle of his compass points towards the north. The needle of every compass has so pointed since the secret was discovered, and he has not to ask when he is already so sure. The benighted man does not pray to be made to feel that the sun will rise in a few hours. Morning has succeeded to night since the world was made, and why should he ask what he knows too well to doubt? But in none of these things is there greater room for assurance than we have each one for himself, in regard to its being appointed to him once to die. Nevertheless, we must pray to be made to know—to be made to feel—that we are to die, in the face of an experience which is certainly not less than that of the parties to whom we have referred. There is a petition that we may believe, believe as they do: for they act on their belief in the fact which this experience incontestably attests. And we may say of this, that it is amongst the strangest of the strange things that may be affirmed of human nature, that whilst, in regard to inferior concerns, we can carefully avail ourselves of experience, taking care to

register its decisions and to deduce from them rules for our guidance—in the mightiest concern of all we can act as though experience had furnished no evidence, and we were left without matter from which to draw inferences. And, nevertheless, in regard to nothing else is experience so uniform. The grain does not always germinate—but *every man dies*. The needle does not always point due north—but *every man dies*. The sun does not cross the horizon in every place in twenty-four hours—but *every man dies*. Yet we must pray—pray as for the revelation of a mystery hidden from our gaze—we must pray to be made to know—to be made to believe—that *every man dies!* For I call it not belief, and our text calls it not belief, in the shortness of life and the certainty of death, which allows men to live without thought of eternity, without anxiety as to the soul, or without an effort to secure to themselves salvation. I call it not belief—no, no, anything rather than belief. Men are rational beings, beings of forethought, disposed to make provision for what they feel to be inevitable: and if there were not a practical infidelity as to their own mortality, they could not be practically reckless as to their own safety.

“And wherefore does the very circumstance of the text, being in the form of a prayer, confirm us in the feeling that to discourse to you on your frailty, is to discourse to you on what is least likely to fix your attention? All the gloominess, of which we spoke to you in the beginning of the sermon, returns upon us. We feel as though we must have been speaking in vain, as though it were lost time which had been given to reflections on the close of another year. Are we thus numbering our days? Yes, we do all thus number our days. But on what scale, or upon what arithmetic? Let us all be honest, and perhaps we shall all confess that we reckon on living, at least, another year. We expect, we calculate on seeing the close of the twelve-month which we are just about beginning. Yet I dare pronounce it certain that we all shall not. So then there is

a numbering of our days ; but, alas ! we so number them that we apply the heart to folly. The young man numbers his days ; he computes that there is a good deal of sand yet left in his hour-glass, and it is not necessary to begin to prepare for eternity. Yes, this is numbering our days that we may apply our hearts unto folly. We need no teaching for this ; we do this naturally, not even contemplating it probable, but at once reckoning on the certainty. But as for numbering our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, for this there must be teaching —supernatural, Divine teaching. The coffin will not teach it ; the open grave will not teach it ; pestilence will not teach it. Thou, O God, and Thou alone, canst make us feel ourselves mortal, that we should live like the immortal ! What an expression is that of St. Paul to the Corinthians !—did you ever ponder it?—‘ *Quit you like men*’—‘ *QUIT you LIKE MEN.*’ ‘ Like men,’ immortal beings that perish not in death ; not like brutes, where there is no soul to survive the dissolution appointed. Then only are we acting as men when we act for eternity.

“ But we forbear—we have said that exhortation is powerless, and why then plead ? We turn to prayer. Now as the year dies, now as 1837 is just giving in its record of our conduct, we turn to prayer. God of the spirit of all flesh, the young are before Thee, the old are before Thee. ‘ So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom ! ’ ”

We quote the following the rather that we heard it, and remember well its powerful influence over the breathless audience. It is on the doctrine of the Resurrection.

“ One after another is withdrawn from the church below, and Heaven is gathering into its capacious bosom* the

* Evidently an imitation of Robert Hall.

company of the justified. We feel our loss, when those whose experience qualified them to teach, and whose life was a sermon to a neighbourhood, are removed to the Church above. But we sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope, 'as we mark the breaches which Death makes on the right hand and on the left.' We may, indeed, think that 'the righteous is taken away from the evil to come,' and that we ourselves are left to struggle through approaching days of fear and perplexity. Be it so! We are not alone. He Who is the Resurrection and the Life leads us on to the battle and the grave.

"'THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!' These are Thy magnificent titles, Captain of our Salvation! and, therefore, we commit to Thee body and soul, for Thou hast redeemed both, and Thou wilt advance both to the noblest and most splendid of portions. Who quails and shrinks, scared by the despotism of Death? Who amongst you fears the dashings of those cold black waters which roll between us and the promised land? Men and brethren, grasp your privileges! Men and brethren, Christ Jesus has 'abolished death.' Will you, by your faithlessness, throw strength to the dethroned and the destroyed? Yes. 'The Resurrection and the Life' 'abolished death.' Ye must indeed die, and so far Death remains undestroyed. But, if the terrible be destroyed, when it can no longer terrify; and if the injurious be destroyed, when it can no longer injure; if the enemy be abolished, when it does the work of a friend; and if the tyrant be abolished, when performing the offices of a servant; if the repulsion be destroyed, when we can welcome it; and if the odious be destroyed, when we can embrace it; if the quicksand be abolished, when we can walk on it and sink not; if the fire be abolished, when we can pass through it and be scorched not; if the poison be abolished, when we can drink it and be hurt not,—then is Death destroyed! then is Death abolished to all who believe on 'the Resurrection and the Life'; and the noble prophecy is

fulfilled. Bear witness, ye groups of the ransomed, bending down from your high citadel of triumph ! Oh, Death, I will be thy plagues ! Oh, Grave, I will be thy destruction !”

We are certain these extracts are rather below the average of Mr. Melvill’s sermons, but they convey an idea of his usual style ; they are less ornate than the bulk of his discourses, for over the greater part there hangs the most profuse foliation of the Corinthian style. In Henry Melvill we have the very culmination of the fine style of preaching. The points of analogy are many between his sermons and those of Dr. M’All. In Melvill we have a more lofty conceptional power, in M’All a more ample diffusiveness. In Melvill we notice the want of riveting, salient points, landmarks of discourse, milestones, and finger-posts, as reminders and memories upon the road ; but this was even much more remarkably the case with Dr. M’All : the torrent of words swept on, language rolled before you like a sea of glass, for his style was much more perfect and transparent than Melvill’s ; but, in reading both the one and the other of these men, we find ourselves oppressed with monotonous magnificence ; it is a waving tapestry, where argent and azure shine, but the figures are dimly visible, if visible at all. Melvill does sometimes allow an image to rise before you in full proportion ; you have impressed upon you a legible and distinct idea, but M’All never ; and both of them fail to present their subjects in a light striking, plain, and lucid.

Upon the whole, what do we want most in

preaching? Even this, that a subject should be placed, not in an atmosphere of sound, but an atmosphere of light. The gift of hearing was conferred, not, we take it, to be a means of confounding the perceptions, and bamboozling the understanding, but as an avenue to the mind, in order that it may see; and so with images, since the world was made, and men began to speak freely, and things acquired a spiritual significance. Symbolism—how few of all the tropes and figures used have been understood or used to any purpose! Time was when every figure was an analogy, and suggested instantly a prompt resemblance to the matter in hand; but now they are more freakish, and their forms far less definite and obvious than the glasses of a kaleidoscope. Perspicuity of style demands much more than the mere grammatical perspicuity of a sentence; it demands that the whole array of the thought and the subject should be marshalled before the hearer's mind. The style of these fine writers is like the setting sun beheld through a mountain mist; all things are confused; everything lies shapeless and undefined; yet you feel a sense of splendour, and you see a shadowing forth of glory; you see enough and feel enough to lead you to exclaim, "Oh that the sun were shining clear and bright to-day!"

Reviewing in our mind many of those discourses which impressed us more when we were young, it seems to us that we cannot acquit our preacher of the charge of casuistry—nay, many, not to say most, of his sermons look like the efforts of a special pleader; there is too much agility, too much

adroitness. Many of his most lengthy hortations have the appearance of tight-rope dancing ; they are too clever. We start at the strange turn—we had almost said the perversion—of some thought. What a strange text—“The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters !” This text was made to do service for a discourse on baptismal regeneration ! “And He commanded that something should be given her to eat”—this was called in to show the necessity of religious education, after baptism, before confirmation. “Sentences in Scripture,” says Dr. Donne, “like hairs in horse-tails, concur in one root of beauty and strength ; but being plucked out one by one, serve only for springes and snares.” We are bound to say that Mr. Melvill has used many a text to the latter purpose. He needed often to keep in mind a wise saying of the old Lightfoot : “Inspired writings are an inestimable treasure to mankind ; for, so many sentences, so many truths. But then the true sense of them must be known ; otherwise, so many sentences, so many authorised falsehoods.” Mr. Melvill loved a paradox, he loved a novelty, he loved a splendid rhapsody ; his style was not favourable to the culture of much exactitude of thought ; his words were too affluent to admit of an equal wealth of ideas in his discourses. But our more especial quarrel now is that he very frequently started from his text altogether in his resolution to elucidate a subject. “Our minister,” said an old lady once—not of Mr. Melvill, though,—“our minister is such a man ; if his text had the small-pox, he’d never catch it.” It must be said that often all that our preacher’s text had to do with his sermon

was, to round the varied periods of his divisions and peroration. "I shall divide," said old Rowland Hill, "my subject into three parts: I shall first go through the text, next go round about the text, and lastly go away from it altogether." Mr. Melvill very frequently went away from the text altogether; it is the fault indeed of the pulpit method, now so common among us, by which the exposition of Scripture is utterly ignored, and an hour expended on the delivery of the essay—a pulpit-theme—an oration—with a text for a motto.

Well, gentlemen of the pulpit, your "Essay" style of discourse is very popular just now, but nothing could be more worthless. In Melvill it reached its highest climax of brilliancy; but is it not comparatively useless? On the whole, it is a splendid detonating powder; it will produce a blaze and a noise, but it kills no game. Moreover, your essayists are mostly genuine disciples of Luys d' Escobar; they are ever hunting out the singular and the fanciful; they start questions which would have remained for ever settled. This fighting extinct devils, this sparring with men of straw, very cleverly constructed to be knocked down, why, it is all as wise as poor Alexander Henderson's tragedy, wherein, said the author, were "the most convincing arguments against incest and self-murder." This was not Christ's method of preaching, nor Peter's or the day of Pentecost, nor Paul's on Mars Hill; nor was this the method of Demosthenes, nor Socrates. No; if usefulness be the aim, better by far the expository power of our Puritanic fathers than the discursive and excursive flights of modern Essay-

ists. How *can* truth be elicited by this method, this holding up of apple or orange to the public eye? Granted, that the apple is very pretty, very round; still we do not want always to look at apples, and then the same apple—nonsense.

But if you are determined to go into the pulpit to read essays, to crack theological nuts, to phantasmagorise, and to start questions as sportsmen start hares—by all means learn Spanish, and read the works of Escobar. There you shall find such questions as these discussed:—

“How many keys gave Christ to Peter?”

“What became of the ark of the covenant at the first destruction of Jerusalem?”

“Which is most obliged to the other—the Virgin Mary to sinners, or sinners to the Virgin Mary; they to her for bringing forth the Redeemer, or she to them for having made a Redeemer necessary?”

“Whether the grief Our Lady felt at the crucifixion was greater or less than her joy at the resurrection?”

“Why God is Three Persons rather than four or five—rather than any other number—particularly as musicians account three an imperfect number?”

“Who governed heaven when God was in the Virgin’s womb?”

“The rib of Adam having belonged to both, who will have it at the resurrection?”

“Is there a free will in brutes?” etc., etc.*

When learned essayists carry their performances

* There is an interesting account of this curious book, and the old friar, in Southey’s “Omniana,” vol. ii., pp. 295-330.

into the pulpit, they stumble on matters certainly sometimes quite as conducive to salvation as the above delectable moot points.

Fine preaching, we say, this of Mr. Melvill's; and the labour bestowed upon it was said to have been immense. During the time that he preached at Camden Chapel in London, the reports in circulation respecting the solicitude manifested by him during the composition of a discourse were many and ludicrous. We heard that he was quite inaccessible for about eight hours of every day in the week, closely locked, it was said, within his study. He, at that time, was said to bestow pains upon his discourses, as if, instead of being delivered to two thousand persons, they were to be models for all future ages. We have sometimes doubted this, and are still prepared to believe that they are exaggerators who assure us that at these times he invariably wrote his discourses twice and sometimes thrice; after which they were transcribed by his wife, in a clear and legible hand, for the pulpit. Suppose the case not to be so bad as this, still is it not dreadful thus to misunderstand the intentions of the Gospel ministry? We do not impugn Mr. Melvill's piety; if he did this, it was no more than hundreds have done to far less purpose than he. But this vamping-up, by whomsoever practised, does seem to be a deplorable mistake; and our belief personally is, that in this, or something like this, we are to look for the real failure of the modern ministry. To prowl to and fro in a study for hours and days, searching for the corbels of speech; to fasten upon a word or a sentence, and pop it down because fine and likely

to create an effect ; the fidgety anxiety with which the sermon advances ; the fastidious rejection of this word and another ; the vanity induced by all this ; the wonder how it will tell ; the rejection of visitors who may desire an interview, where a better word might be spoken ;—men who act thus surround themselves with a kind of awe-struck wonder ; men who are only seen in the pulpit to advantage at all, who are everlastingly fearful lest they may have committed themselves by some action rather more human and friendly than ordinary. And what does this imply ? The belief that the minister should be another being than the hearer—that he is holier, wiser, better : this is the current belief, and it must be said that the people do all they can to encourage the idea. Presently the veil drops ; in company, people perhaps find that the ministry is composed of beings like themselves ; and, as all persons dislike to find themselves wrong, especially when they imposed upon themselves, they pour down a torrent of angry maledictions upon the whole race of ministers ; finding them no better than others, they determine that they must therefore be worse. In all these remarks we intend no invidious allusions to Mr. Melvill ; we should judge him to have been a most lovely and kindly man. Often, very often, have we seen him, during the reading of prayers on the Sabbath evening, open his pew-door and beckon in some poor old man or woman standing in the crowded aisle. On such occasions he always shared his Prayer-book with the humble worshipper. Little traits of character like these open up to us the whole manhood, especially when we see them to be

the result of unaffected and spontaneous kindness. No, no ! we mean here nothing more than the discussion of the inflated style of discourse as a means of pulpit instruction ; our remarks must apply, not to Henry Melvill, but to the Rev. Mr. Pecksniff, for that gentleman is installed reader and preacher in many a church and chapel throughout the kingdom ; and, consistently with ourselves and our book, we turn aside repeatedly in the course of our pages to enter our protest against the oratory which affects the ears more than the perceptions, and gives more colours to fancy than impulses to holiness.

THE END.

INDEX.

A

Abelard, Peter, 83, and St. Bernard, 97-99.
Abraham, the palace of, 227.
Action, eloquence in, 17.
Actions, good mending bad, 422.
Afterwards, 320.
Allegory, a strange, 252.
Amram, the son of, 114.
Ananias, a discourse on, 261.
Ancients, eloquence of the, 52.

Anecdotes :—

Amram, the son of, 114.
Arius and the Bishop, 39.
Ass, coveting thy neighbour's, 237.
Bishop, treated as a, 247, 248.
"Cask, fill up the," 363.
Christian *versus* fool, 300.
Clothes? where are your, 241.
Commandments, ten, 352, 353.
Conversation, a set-off to, 265.
Cotin, Abbé, and Bossuet, 12, 13.
Curate and the old woman, the, 313, 314.
Desolation, a picture of, 274.
"Devil, I meant it for the," 244.
Dictionary or Bible? 115.
Divinity, no sick, 242.
Dose, getting his, 303.
Elect, chalking the, 264.
Eutychus, fate of, 358.
Father, a child riding its own, 243, 244.
Fichte, of, 45.

Anecdotes (*continued*) :—

Fire, give life to the, 375.
Good-bye for ever, 299.
Gratitude, 350.
Hairs, splitting, 289, 290.
Hall, Robert, of, 178.
Horse, the priest's, 243.
Ideas, a juxtaposition of, 271.
Infidel and missionary, 274-280.
Lodging, giving the devil a, 346.
Louis XIV. and Massillon, 7.
Methodist and settler, 242.
Minister, a nice, 364.
Mollah and the Koran, the, 126.
Name, a little boy's, 244.
Order, kneeling and standing, 243.
Paintings, the Scotchman and the, 379.
Pity the lads, 352.
Prayer, a singular, 243.
Praying, 290.
Preacher, a ready, 13-15.
Preacher, a strange, 50.
Preacher, a youthful, 8.
Preachers, how made, 243.
Preachers, the two, 51.
Quaker and the manuscript, the, 277.
Quincey, De, and the cook, 118, 119.
"Revision, I am the," 375.
Rich, woe to the, 359, 360.
Richard I. and Blondel, 35.
Short and tedious, 358.
Spiridion, of, 40.

Anecdotes (*continued*) :—

Stale bread, 290.
 Stones, false, 389.
 Student and his mother, the, 346.
 Taylor, Father, of, 288-290.
 Text, a singular, 267.
 Twice, heard the clock, 358.
 Umbrella, religion an, 264.
 Unitarian rebuked, the, 300.
 Waugh, Alexander, 342, 346, 347.
 “Weet, I’m vara,” 356.
 Whims, Dr. Watts’s, 267.
 Whitefield and Chesterfield, 32.
 Another, one cried unto, 398.
 Antioch, Chrysostom at, 209.
 Apostrophe, power of, 455.
 Appeal, a mother’s, 207, 208.
 Aquitaine, Duke, and St. Bernard, 190.
 Argument, a convincing, 39-40; parables older than, 434, 435.
 Arius and the Bishop, 39.
 Ark, story of the, 425-427.
 Arnold, Matthew, quoted, 120.
 Art, Carlyle and Ruskin on, 78; speech not inferior to, 193; pulpit, 323, 324.
 Asbury, Bishop, 240, 241.
 Ascham, Roger, quoted, 50.
 Ass, coveting a neighbour’s, 237.
 Athens, 311-313.
 Atoms, man a bundle of, 279, 280.
 Attraction necessary for a Sabbath, 436.
 Audience and preacher, 324, 325.
 Augustine and Chrysostom compared, 207.
 Austerities, St. Bernard’s, 66, 67.

B

Bartholomew, a sermon on, 317.
 Basil, St., vision of, 222.
 Bathos, magnificent, 450.
 Beans, the swine and the, 265.
 Beggar, the blind, 32.
 Beloved, leaning on her, 305, 306.
 Bernard, St., or Demosthenes? 189.
 — achievements, 190-192.
 — birth and parentage, 62.

boyhood, 63.
 — work, called to his, 65.
 — austerities, 66, 67.
 — love of nature, 67, 68.
 — builds Clairvaux, 69, 84.
 — William of Champeaux, 70.
 — on monkish fare, 73.
 — miracles, 73-75.
 — visit to Paris, 75.
 — on a Cluniac dinner, 76.
 — on monkish dress, 76.
 — on rich churches, 77.
 — address to Knights Templars, 79.
 — on the Crusaders, 80.
 — and the rival popes, 81.
 — and Henry I., 82, 83.
 — and Pope Innocent, 83.
 — return to Clairvaux, 84.
 — on the Song of Solomon, 85.
 — illustrations of style, 87, 88, 92, 94.
 — conversions by, 90.
 — death of Gerard, 91.
 — and Peter Abelard, 97-99.
 — preaches the second Crusade, 99.
 — death, 101.
 Berridge, John, 256, 257; drollery of, 258.
 Bible or dictionary? 115.
 Binney, humour and satire of, 281, 282.
 Birch, Rev. Euclid, 194.
 Bishop, story of an old, 38; and dean, 237; treated as a, 247.
 Bishops, “Brother George” on, 129.
 Bitten, the biter, 243.
 Bloodthirstiness, saintly, 79.
 Book *versus* speech, 278.
 Bossuet at De Rambouillet, 9-11; and the abbés, 12; and Melville, 444.
 Boston, Father Taylor in, 285; Jenny Lind in, 299.
 Bostwick, Dr., anecdote of, 243, 244.
 Boyhood, St. Bernard’s, 63.
 Boyle, Robert, on preaching, 184.
 Bradbury, Tom, 266.
 Braggarts, noisy, 326.
 Bread, stale, 290.

Brevity, evils of, 357 ; necessity for, 365, 366.
 Brush College, graduates of, 242.
 Burke, Edmund, as an orator, 371.
 "But," a sermon on, 317.

C

Camp, preachers in the, 140.
 Canning, anecdote of, 358.
 Cares, pastoral, 350.
 Carlyle on preachers and pulpit, 48, 49 ; quoted, 78.
 Carpenter, the learned, 269, 270.
 "Cask, fill up the," 363.
 Caturce, Jean de, sermon by, 57.
 Chalmers, Dr., eloquence of, 18 ; and Melville, 443, 444.
 Champeaux, William of, and St. Bernard, 70.
 Chananiah, Rabbi, 370.
 Channing and Father Taylor, 299.
 Chemistry, sublimity of, 381.
 Chesterfield, Lord, and Whitefield, 32 ; quoted, 183.
 Children, loss of, 149 ; death of, 348.
 Christ, Thorwaldsen's, 200-202.
 Christians, burial rites of the early, 226.
 Chrysostom, power of, 198.
 — birth and parentage, 206.
 — compared with Augustine, 207.
 — mother of, 207, 208.
 — training for work, 209.
 — at Antioch, 209.
 — statues of, 210.
 — style, illustrations of, 211, 216, 224, 226, 227, 229.
 — bishop of Constantinople, 213.
 — social reformer, 214.
 — synod of the Oak, 215.
 — arrest and banishment, 216.
 — triumphant return, 217, 218.
 — second banishment, 220.
 — life in exile, 221.
 — vision of St. Basil, 222.
 — death and burial, 222, 223.
 — personal appearance, 231.
 — as a preacher, 232, 233.
 Church, oratory born in the, 15 ;

vision of a stone, 133 ; preachers of the early, 204.
 Churches, vanity of rich, 77.
 Clairvaux, the Abbey, 69, 71, 72, 84.
 Clara, Abraham Sancta, 249.
 Clothes ? where are your, 241.
 Coal, the text a live, 316 ; a living, 375, 376.
 Coals, live, 314.
 Coarseness, 246, 252.
 Conciseness and diffuseness, 364.
 Congregations, fashionable, 437.
 Conscience a power, 331 ; a monument of, 332-334 ; difficulty of dealing with, 334.
 Constantinople, Chrysostom bishop of, 213.
 Conversation, a set-off to, 265.
 Conversions, mediæval, 90.
 Conviction, ora'ory in, 362.
 Convictions, visited by, 420.
 Cormenin, Viscount de, quoted, 199.
 Cotin, Abbé, 12, 13.
 Cow, the Gospel a milch, 239.
 Cowper quoted, 1, 2, 3, 4, 50.
 Credulity, scientific, 384, 385.
 Creeds, Father Taylor on, 298.
 Cross, pulpit at St. Paul's, 268.
 Crowns, more, 301.
 Crusade, the first, 63 ; preaching the second, 99-101.
 Crusaders, description of, 80.
 Curate, advice to a young, 313, 314.

D

Dancing, pulpit tight-rope, 462, 463.
 Darwin quoted, 44.
 David, Psalms of, 44.
 Dawson, Billy, 247, 248, 267 ; quoted, 424, 425.
 Deacon's one-horse shay quoted, 181.
 Deans, Jeanie, appeal of, 181.
 Death, Jeremy Taylor's, 152, 153 ; St. Chrysostom's, 222 ; Father Taylor's, 307.
 Delivery, a slow, 399, 400.
 Demosthenes, eloquence of, 51, 52 ; and Robert Hall compared, 177, 178 ; or St. Bernard ? 189.

Denominations, advice to all, 294-297.
 Desolation, a picture of, 274.
 Devil, preaching of the, 200; "I meant it for the," 244; dialogue on the, 271.
 Diabolus, Frater, 37.
 Dialogue, a singular, 271.
 Dickens, Charles, quoted, 305; on preaching, 315.
 Dictionary or Bible? 115.
 Died, in the year King Uzziah, 396.
 Dies, every man, 456-459.
 Dinner, a Cluniac, 76.
 Discourses, character of our Lord's, 175.
 Divine, sayings of a Scotch, 254; an old world, 337.
 Dominican, sermon by a, 123, 124.
 Drawing-room, throne of eloquence in a, 8, 9.
 Dress, monkish love of, 76.
 Droll in the pulpit, the, 236.
 "Ductor dubitantium," character of, 164.
 Duke, Melvill and the Iron, 322.
 Dulness, power of, 376.
 Dyer quoted, 144.

E

Ear-gate, 35.
 Effective, ridicule may be, 279.
 Elect, chalking the, 264.
 Eloquence :—
 Action is, 17.
 Ancient and modern, 172.
 Attribute of the highest, 181.
 Blazing, 52.
 Chalmers, Dr., 18, 19.
 Demosthenes, 51, 52.
 Hall, Robert, 19, 20, 179.
 House-that-Jack-built style of, 114, 115.
 Hume on, 52.
 Mind in motion, 173.
 Niagara style of, 21.
 Outgrown, 187.
 Persuasion is, 174.
 Present day, 21.
 Pulpit the throne of, 4, 16, 17.
 Savonarola's, 42.

Eloquence (*continued*) :—
 Throne of, 2, 3.
 Trollhallen style of, 19.
 Truth of real, 177.
 Versus poetry, 185.
 Whitefield's, 25-33.
 Emerson, Father Taylor on, 293.
 Epigram, a French, 314.
 Epitaph, an impressive, 257.
 Essayists, order of, 172.
 Esthetic, 380.
 Eudoxia, Empress, statue of, 219.
 Eutychus, fate of, 358.
 Evelyn, John, and Jeremy Taylor, 148.
 Evening, the gladness of, 401.
 Example, a healthful, 351.
 Exile, Chrysostom in, 221; return from, 229.
 Expression, the Lady of, 135.
 Ezerborn, story of the clock of, 168.
 Ezra, the preaching of, 309-311.

G

Gehazi, Rev. Mr., 373.
 Genesis, wanderings in search of, 384; Professor Tyndall's, 385-388.
 Gerard, St. Bernard's lament for, 94-97.
 Gerund, Friar, preaching of, 274.
 Gibbon referred to, 214, 215, 218.
 God, nothing great but, 7; wrath of, 27; all in all, 87; -feet of, 88; loving-kindness of, 211.
 Goëthe quoted, 176, 177.
 Gold and lead in oratory, 183.
 Golden Grove, Taylor at, 144.
 Gospel a milch cow, the, 239.
 Gospels, the two, 199.
 Grammar, breaking, 264.
 Grandees, story of congregational, 103-107.
 Graveyard, lessons of a, 452-454.
 Gray quoted, 112.
 Groaning, 289.
 Guérin, Père, a sermon by, 252.
 Gwennap Pit, the, 24, 25.

H

Hairs, splitting, 289, 290.

Hall, Robert, eloquence of, 19, 20 ; and Demosthenes contrasted, 177 ; on Rowland Hill, 264 ; on Alexander Waugh, 340 ; imitated, 459. Hamilton, Dr. William, 321. Harm's, Pastor, advice, 364. Haslebach characterized, 370. Hatton, Lord, dedication to, 143. Heat, mechanical equivalent for, 315. Heaven, hearing the bells of, 301. Henry, Matthew, quoted, 50 ; simplicity of, 126-128. Henry I. and St. Bernard, 82, 83. Hibbard, Billy, anecdotes of, 244. Hieroglyphics, nature a system of, 380. Hill, Rowland, and the Gospel, 239 ; anecdotes of, 263-265. Hiram, present of to the Temple, 235. Horace, mottoes of, 126, 352. Hume on eloquence, 52. Humour in the pulpit, 237, 238, 252, 267, 268 ; true, 246, 253, 254 ; children of, 259 ; what is, 283 ; Father Taylor's, 290-292.

I

Ideas, a juxtaposition of, 271. If, Sergeant, 258. Illustration, a touching, 343 ; value of, 433. Imagery, bold, 53. Images, rhetorical, 115, 116 ; quaint and graphic, 290-292 ; pictures of the soul, 423. Imagination, James Parson's, 328-330 ; what is, 418, 419 ; embodying and unbosoming, 427 ; work of the, 429, 430. Infidel and the missionary, the, 279, 280. Infidelity, modern, 178. Innocent, Pope, and St. Bernard, 83. Instruction, value of oral, 193. Instructor, the minister an, 415. Invitation, the voice of, 202, 203. Itinerants, rough and ready, 245.

J Jameson, Mrs., quoted, 298. Jay, William, happy humour of, 253, 254 ; and Alexander Waugh, 340. Jerrold, Douglas, quoted, 421. Johnson, Dr., advice of, 364. Joy, saints shouting for, 425.

K

Kedar, as the tents of, 92. Knights Templars, exhortation to, 79. Knill, Richard, pathos of, 117. Koran, reading the, 126. Kruber, Jacob, anecdotes of, 242-244 ; illustrations, 259, 260 ; droll sayings of, 260, 261.

L

L's, the three, 364. Labour and perseverance, 367, 368 ; study misapplied, 466, 469. Lads, pity the, 352. Lambs, Father Taylor's, 285. Language, wonderful pulpit, 115, 116. Lantern, the dark, 420. Laughter a great preacher, 238. Law, preaching on the, 302. Legend, a mediæval, 37. Lessons not laces, 424. Leviticus, preaching from, 275. Levity in the pulpit, 316. Life, the face an index to the, 394, 395 ; resurrection and the, 459. Light, kindling Scripture, 226 ; not smoke, 359. Likeness, human, in all things, 420. Lincoln, President, prayer for, 290. Lind, Jenny, in Boston, 299, 300. Lion, Luther's fable of the, 200. Liveth, He ever, 348. Livingstone, John, referred to, 50. Lodging, giving the devil a, 346. Logic, limitations of, 418 ; and parable, 424. Louis XIV. and Massillon, 7 ; anecdote of, 359, 360.

Luther, preaching of, 49 ; fable of the lion, 200 ; maxims for preachers, 358.

Lynch, Thomas, quoted, 431.

M

MacAll, Dr., and the Methodist, 51.

Manner is the soul, 304, 305.

Mansell, Dean, quoted, 122.

Mansoul, the town of, 34.

Martineau, Miss, quoted, 293.

Martyr, sermon from a, 57.

Martyrdom, Savonarola's, 48.

Massillon in Notre Dame, 6 ; and Louis XIV., 7.

Melancholy, 349.

Melville, Henry, and the Iron Duke, 322, 323.

— youthful memories of, 439.

— power as an orator, 440, 441.

— and Dr. Chalmers, 443.

— and Bossuet, 444.

— choice of texts, 444, 445.

— style an influence, 445-450.

— illustrations, 450, 452, 454, 456, 459.

— power over his audience, 451.

— fine style of preacher, 461.

Metaphysics, life a region of, 383 ; grandeur of, 390 ; definition of, 419.

Metropolis, magnets of the, 437.

Meulen, Van der, quoted, 125.

Micah the priest-maker, 254, 255.

Miller, Hugh, quoted, 319.

Milman, Dean, referred to, 214, 215.

Mind, a well-furnished, 339.

Minister, an old world, 364 ; criticism upon a, 364.

Ministers, character of Scotch, 338 ; scholarship of modern, 339.

Ministry, rowdyism in the, 130.

Miracles, St. Bernard's, 73-75.

Misers, how to use, 264.

Monastery, the mediæval, 65.

Monkeys and peacocks for the temple, 235.

Montgomery, James, quoted, 53.

Morgan, De, a story by, 115.

Mother, St. Bernard's, 62 ; St. Chrysostom's, 207-209 ; student and his, 346.

Motion, mind in, 173.

Motives, words becoming, 174.

Mullois, Abbé, advice of, 357 ; quoted, 365.

Music, power of, 399.

N

Naaman, cure of, 406-411.

Name, a little boy's, 244.

Napoleon I., harangues of, 365.

Narni, Friar, power of, 198.

New Testament folk-lore, 432.

Newton, John, on Whitefield, 28.

Nice, Council of, incidents in the, 39-41.

Nitrogen, wonders of, 381-383.

Nolley, Richard, and the settler, 242.

Normandy, Marquis, and his chaplain, 358.

Notre Dame, Massillon in, 6.

Nuts, cracking theological, 465.

O

Oak, the Synod of the, 215.

Orations, Melville's, 440-443.

Orator, the true, 187 ; a great natural, 286 ; *versus* singer, 360.

Orators, various, 180 ; uncomfortable cousins, 186.

Oratory, secular and sacred, 15, 16 ; a mystery, 179 ; effects of, 188.

Order, kneeling and standing, 243.

Organ, nature an, 390-392.

P

Parable, power of the true, 431-434.

Parables, two, 421, 422.

Paris, mediæval, 75.

Parker, Dr. Joseph, quoted, 318.

Parr, Dr., quoted, 119.

Parsons, Benjamin, at home, 374.

Parsons, James, quiet power of, 326 ; imagination of, 328-330.

Pathos a tongue of fire, 41 ; a bit of real, 117.

Pedantry in the pulpit, 112; satisfied, 113.

Peel, Sir Robert, quoted, 131.

Pen, judicial, power of the, 46-48; *versus* pulpit, 48.

Persuasion, eloquence in, 174.

Pharisaism, natural history of, 437-439.

Pharisee and publican, 273.

Philosopher, the shepherd and the, 40, 41.

Philosophy, false, 388-390.

Phocin quoted, 188.

Pictures, two ways of looking at, 378, 379.

Pit, the Gwennap, 24, 25.

Plausibility, the curse of the pulpit, 195.

Poetical quotations, 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 25, 27, 45, 50, 53, 60, 62, 111, 112, 122, 130, 144, 172, 177, 181, 269, 292, 297, 314, 316, 319, 325, 331, 371, 373, 377, 380, 381, 401, 418, 423, 425, 427, 428, 430, 431, 433, 447.

Poetry *versus* eloquence, 185.

Pokers, the two, 421.

Polyglott, Rev. Erebius, 194.

Popes, rival, 81.

Power, the hitting, 5; the hooking, 50.

Poyser, Mrs., a saying of, 424.

Prayer, a humourous, 242, 243.

Prayers, singular, 288-290.

Praying and fighting, 64.

Preach, how and what to, 49.

Preacher, the, 2, 3; a youthful, 8; anecdote of a ready, 13-15; the strange, 50; a poet, 157; St. Chrysostom as a, 232; laughter a great, 238; an extraordinary, 303, 304; power of the, 330; a poet and painter, 404, 405.

Preachers, Wesley's advice to, 50; last of the mediæval, 54; Ruskin on pulpit and, 108-111; ornamental, 131; three orders of, 171, 172; Christ a model for, 175; abiding work of, 184; all men not fitted for, 196; early church, 204, 205; backwoods, 240, 241, 244-246; how to make, 243; velvet-lipped, 261; fine, 264; characterized, 269; fine but false, 273; various, 304; and audience, 324, 325; maxims for, 358; advice to, 364.

Preaching, foolishness of, 1, 197; brave, 4; Dr. Chalmers', 18, Whitefield's, 26, 27; polished and plain, 51; ingenious, 126-128; Robert Boyle on, 184; that is wanted, 277; Father Taylor's, 287, 288; Dickens on, 315; foolishness and foolish, 318; impressions of Stratton's, 396; the essay style of, 464.

Pretentiousness, learned, 121.

Professor compared to a sow, 263.

Prolixity, learned, 371.

Prophesying, Taylor's liberty of, 166.

Psalm xxiii., a new version of, 321.

Pulpit, action in the, 23.

— Ages, in the Middle, 253.

— art, 323, 324.

— Carlyle on the, 48, 49.

— Cowper's estimate of the, 2.

— coxcomb in the, the, 4.

— droll in the, the, 236.

— drollery a set-off to the, 266.

— eccentricity in the, 253, 254.

— eloquence of the, 17.

— false finery in the, 111.

— finery in the, 103.

— freedom needed in the, 276.

— humour in the, 267, 268, 337.

— intellect and feeling in the, 21, 22.

— levity in the, 316.

— man in the, 3.

— manner in the, 304, 305.

— moral force needed in the, 198.

— oration in the, 21-23.

— pedantry in the, 112.

— plausibility the curse of the, 195.

— Punch in the, 267.

— satire in the, 281, 282.

— should be guarded, 277.

— singular language in the, 115, 116.

Pulpit, stake as a, the, 58-60.
 —— story of the, 1-3.
 —— St. Paul's Cross, 268.
 —— throne of eloquence, 4. 17.
 —— throne of the orator, 16.
 —— tongue of fire, the, 39.
 —— *versus* pen, 48.
 Pulpits, artistic Continental, 107.
 —— Ruskin on preachers and, 108, 109-111.

Q

Quaker, manuscript of the, 277.
 Quietness, power of, 326.
 Quincey, De, and the cook, 118, 119.

R

Rambouillet, De, Bossuet at, 9-11.
 Reformer, Chrysostom a social, 214.
 Return, to God belongeth the, 335.
 Reviewer, characteristics of a, 178.
 Rib, Adam's, sermon on, 125.
 Richard I. and Blondel, 35.
 Ridicule, power of, 279.
 Ridley, last words of, 59, 60.
 River, beyond the, 348.
 Robertson, Frederick, quoted, 429, 430.
 Robinson, Robert, and Carnifex, 271.
 Rogers, Henry, quoted, 436.
 Ruskin quoted, 78; on pulpits and preachers, 108-111.

S

Satanology, 318.
 Savonarola, preaching of, 42; martyrdom of, 43.
 Sayes Court, 322.
 Sayings, droll, 260.
 Science, limitations of, 384, 385; false finery of, 388, 389.
 Scotchman, a genuine, 341.
 Scotus, Dun, quoted, 125.
 Seclusion, penalties of, 411-414.
 Secunda, mother of Chrysostom, 207-209.
 Seeing, two ways of, 378, 379.
 Self-consciousness, ministrations to, 353.

Self-denial, the art of, 274, 275.
 Sens, tournament of, 99.
 Sermon, an impromptu, 14; a good, 50; singular divisions of a, 114, 115; a Dominican, 123; on Adam's rib, 125; model divisions of a, 126, 127; by Matthew Wilks, 183; and looking-glass, 184; coarse (note), 247-249, 252; on a tombstone, 257; a singular, 294-297; a nasty, 318; length of the, 356, 357; a model, 406-411; a thing *sui generis*, 417; an allegoric, 424, 425.
 Sermons, Jeremy Taylor's, 132; character of, 169, 171; method of construction, 194; singular, 276; foolish, 318; dryness of, 356, 357; obscurity in, 359; printed, 360, 361; long, 364.
 Service, an ideal Christian, 309-311.
 Shakespeare quoted, 17.
 Short and tedious, 358.
 Simeon, Charles, simplicity of, 114.
 Simplicity, Divine, 50.
 "Sin, that is," 319.
 Sisters, the three, 134.
 Smith, Sydney, saying of, 369.
 Society, mediæval, 85.
 Socrates, 175.
 Soda-water, decanted, 361.
 Sodom, apples of, 141.
 Solemnity, mock, 395.
 Solomon, Hiram's present to, 235.
 Son, the prodigal, 250-252.
 Song of Solomon, St. Bernard's, 86.
 Sorrow, medicine for, 348.
 Soul, influence over the, 331.
 Soul, manner is the, 304, 305.
 Soul, the overfull, 362.
 Souls, how to touch, 38.
 Sounds, joyful, 402.
 Sovereigns, dead but sceptred, 23.
 Sow, Rowland Hill's use of the, 263.
 Speaker, the public, 196.
 Speech, origin of, 43; Darwin on, 44; power of not to be despised, 192; *versus* book, 278; grotesque modes of, 290, 291; plainness indispensable, 368, 369.
 Speed in oratory, 179.

Spiridion, story of, 40, 41.
 Spirit, the imprisoned, 36.
 Spurgeon, C. H., quoted, 53.
 Stake, preaching at the, 58-60.
 Stewart, Alexander, Hugh Miller on, 319.
 Sticks, dry, 356, 372, 373.
 Stones, spurious, 389.
 Stratton, James, characteristics of, 393.
 —— face of, 394, 395.
 —— expository style, 395, 396, 406, 415.
 —— manner of delivery, 399, 400.
 —— isolation of, 411-414.
 —— theology of, 414.
 —— an instructor, 416.
 —— idiosyncrasy of, 159.
 —— illustrations, 396, 398, 401, 402, 404, 406.
 Strauss's Life of Christ, 281.
 Stream, the magnetic, 326.
 Style, colloquial, a, 300, 301.
 —— essay, 464.
 —— fine, the, 461.
 —— Henry's, Matthew, 126-128.
 —— house-that-Jack-built, 114, 115.
 —— humour, coarse, 252.
 —— Melville's, 445-450.
 —— perspicuity of, 462.
 —— stately, the, 103.
 —— Stratton's, James, 395, 406.
 —— Taylor's, Jeremy, 146, 147.
 —— vermillion and gamboge, 115, 116.
 Style, illustrations of :—
 Abraham, the palace of, 227.
 Ananias, 261.
 beggar and his dog, 32.
 Beloved, leaning on her, 305.
 Bible, the English, 454.
 bloodthirstiness, saintly, 79.
 children, death of, 348.
 Christians, burial rites of early, 226.
 churches, vanity of rich, 77.
 conscience, 159.
 crow, 260.
 Crusaders, the, 80.
 David, Psalms of, 344.

Style, illustrations of (*continued*) :—
 death, gaining by, 216.
 devices, ignorant of his, 265.
 dies, every man, 456.
 exile, return from, 229.
 fishes, sermon to the, 55-57.
 forest, autumnal reflections in a, 404.
 friends, departed, 349.
 Gerard, Brother, 94-97.
 God all in all, 87.
 God, boundless loving-kindness of, 211.
 God, the feet of, 88.
 graveyard, lessons of a, 452.
 him, I don't mean, 247.
 humanity, all the sorrows of, 162.
 If, Sergeant, 258.
 imagination, faculty of, 429.
 Jesus, 450.
 Kedar, as the tents of, 92.
 lark and the soul, the, 158.
 liveth, He ever, 348.
 man, life and reason of, 159.
 melancholy, 349.
 Micah the priest-maker, 254, 255.
 Naaman, the cure of, 406.
 religion, lukewarmness in, 161.
 resurrection, on the doctrine of, 459.
 river, beyond the, 348.
 self-denial, the art of, 274.
 sickness, sanctified, 157.
 Sodom, apples of, 141.
 son, the prodigal, 250.
 sorrow, medicine for, 348.
 soul, progress of towards God, 158.
 sounds, joyful, 402.
 sow, the professor as a, 263.
 sympathy, 348.
 tenderness, 160.
 thief, salvation of the, 224.
 trooper, the wounded, 141.
 vision, Isaiah's, 398.
 Subject, a wide, 237.
Sursum Corda, 7.
 Sweetness and froth, 363.
 Symbolism, 462.
 Sympathy, 348.
 Symphony, Rev. Octavian, 194.

T

Tabernacle, scene in a, 29-32.
 Talkers, the order of, 171.
 Taylor, Father :—
 — birth and early life, 285.
 — in Boston, 285.
 — natural orator, 286.
 — characteristics, 286.
 — method of preaching, 287.
 — singular prayers, 288-290.
 — anecdotes, 290, 299, 300.
 — humour, 290-292.
 — tenderness, 292, 293.
 — singular sermon, 294-297.
 — liberality of, 297, 298.
 — on creeds, 298.
 — Jenny Lind and, 299, 300.
 — colloquial style, 300, 301.
 — and the law, 301-303.
 — sailors, 304.
 — sermon by, 305.
 — death and burial, 307.
 Taylor, Jeremy.
 — criticism on by Dr. South, 132.
 — Withington, Dr., on, 136.
 — birth and ancestry, 138.
 — career of, 138.
 — Uppingham, life at, 139.
 — chaplain to the king, 139-142.
 — apples of Sodom, 141.
 — life and work in Wales, 142.
 — liberty of prophesying, 143.
 — Golden Grove, 144-148, 166.
 — trials, 145.
 — style, 146, 147.
 — imprisoned, 148.
 — and Evelyn, 148.
 — loss of children, 149.
 — Kilulta, at, 150.
 — made bishop, 151.
 — death, 152, 153.
 — works, 153, 154.
 — intolerable learning, 155.
 — style, 155, 158, 159, 160-162.
 — poet preacher, 157.
 — theology, 163.
 Tediousness, an example of, 370.
 Tenderness, instances of, 292-294.
 Tennessee, old Jemmy of (note), 247-249.

Tesselin, character of, 62.

Text, a singular, 267; a nasty, 318; a short, 320; an appropriate, 322; a wonderful (note), 379.
 Theatre, better than a, 303.
 Thierry, St., on Clairvaux, 71, 72.
 Theology, Jeremy Taylor's, 163; Stratton's, 414.

Theories, Tyndall's strange, 385-388.

Thief, salvation of the, 224.
 Things, rememberable, 183.

Thorwaldsen's Christ, 200-202.

Thought, the Lady of, 134.

Thought, windows of, 423.

Titles, singular, 276.

Tombstone, sermon on a, 257.

Tongue and pen, 4, 6.

Toplady quoted, 276.

Tradition, a Hebrew, 370.

Trifling, solemn, 124, 125; ingenuous, 319.

Truths, neglected, 419.

Tyndall, strange theories of, 385-388.

U

Umbrella, religion an, 268.

Unction the tongue of fire, 37, 38.

Unitarians, Father Taylor and the, 298-300.

Uppingham, Jeremy Taylor at, 139.

Usefulness, secret of, 354, 355.

Uzziah died, the year, King, 396.

V

Vanity, all is, 8, 9-11.

Vieyra, Antonio, 54; satirises pedantry, 113.

Voltaire, calling to, 301.

W

Wales, Jeremy Taylor in, 142.

Warning, a singular, 273.

Waugh, Alexander, 336.

— character and early scenes, 337.

— early thoroughness, 339.

— as a preacher, 340, 341, 343

344.

Waugh, Alexander, personal appearance of, 341.
— genuine Scotchman, a, 341, 342.
— Psalms of David, 344.
— power in the pulpit, 345.
— anecdotes of, 346, 347.
— illustrations of, 348.
— tenderness, 349.
— pastoral cares, 350.
— healthful example, 351.
— humour, 351.
— secret of his usefulness, 354.
Weakness, power in, 176.
Webster, Daniel, quoted, 49 ; and Father Taylor, 286.
Wesley quoted, 25 ; advice to preachers, 50.
Wilberforce, Samuel, quoted, 419, 420.
Whately, satire of, 286.
Whims, Dr. Watts's, 267.

Whitefield, preaching of, 26, 27 ; scene in his tabernacle, 29-32 ; a rule of, 364.
Wilks, Matthew, sermon by, 183, 320.
Withington, Dr., on Jeremy Taylor, 136, 137.
Wit in the pulpit, 237 ; humour and drollery, 239.
Wonders, four, 14.
Wood, the pulpit of, 1.
Word, power of a Divine, 36.
Words, big, 117, 118.
Wordsworth quoted, 18.
Works, character of Jeremy Taylor's, 153, 154.
Wormwood, valley of, 6, 9, 70.

Z

Zany, the clerical, 249, 278.



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